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# REDEEMING GRACE

*DISPLAYED*

## TO THE CHIEF OF SINNERS:

181

Being the outlines

OF GOD'S GRACIOUS DEALINGS WITH HIS UNWORTHY SERVANT,

## *THOMAS TAYLOR.*

To which is annexed,

*A short account of his Travels in Preaching the Gospel*

Also are added,

NINE SERMONS UPON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I AM CHIEF.*—1 Tim. i. 15.

**Leeds:**

PRINTED BY GEORGE WILSON,

*HUNSLET-LANE.*

1804.

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# Preface.

*I DO not know that I should ever have troubled the world with any part of my insignificant history, which may appear very little interesting to any one, except myself; but that venerable servant of God,* The Rev. John Wesley, *requesting a short account to insert in the Magazine, about twenty years ago: I with reluctance complied, hoping it might be of use to some simple souls, as things of a like nature have been to me. I am aware how difficult a thing it is for a man to write his own history; as there are several things which would appear with a far better grace, were they to come from another hand, which certain incidents may make necessary to be related. Again, there are circumstances which one would wish to be buried in oblivion; and yet a generous mind cannot pass them over: as the latter is my case, I was the more reluctant in publishing my own folly.*

*More than twenty years are elapsed since the short narration was first published, and many things having happened since that time, in the Methodist Connexion, in which I am not a little implicated. I think it quite eligible to give a short statement of them to the world.*

*My day is far spent, and perhaps this may be the last production which I may send into the world. May God grant it his blessing.*

Leeds, Feb. 20, 1804.

Wes. 879

AN

# ACCOUNT

of the

# EXPERIENCE

of

## *Mr. THOMAS TAYLOR.*

I WAS born, Nov. 11, 1738, in the parish of Rothwell, near Leeds, in Yorkshire. I was the youngest of eight children, seven of whom were sons, and the eldest a daughter; so that I was a *seventh son*. My father was a tanner, and had something considerable to begin the world with; but proving unfortunate in business, he brought his family into a low condition; especially the younger part, which fell particularly on me who was the youngest of all by six years. I have heard much said in praise of my mother; but she died before I was a year old, which, I apprehend, was no small loss to me. I can but just remember my father; so that I was bereaved of both father and mother, before I was six years of age. I then fell into the hands of a step-mother for some time, who took care of me, as if I had been her own child. I had, pretty early, something of a desire and turn for

learning. My father and mother being Presbyterians, I got the Assembly's Catechism off by heart, when I was but four years old, and said it to the Minister. I had some visits from the Divine Spirit very early; but having no one to encourage me, they wore off. My natural temper was active, wild, and very mischievous; and I was so known an offender in little wild pranks, that I have often suffered, though not guilty: for when the real delinquent could not be found out, the saddle was laid upon my back. Being of a turbulent, daring cast, I often, when very little, ran myself into great dangers, by climbing up into high trees, and many other things of a like kind. When I was between five and six years of age, as I was walking by the river Calder, and trying how near the edge I could go, the ground gave way, and I fell in where it was very deep. My father, and some other men were at a little distance, and heard my cries as I fell in. They ran to me, and soon got me out, and found I was not much worse. I often rambled away, even at that age, so that nobody knew where I was; and being frequently pinched with hunger, I sometimes stole fruit. Indeed I often rambled so far that I knew not where I was; and sometimes having played some unlucky frolic, was afraid to return home. One day, being in my wandering humour, I got to a large farm house, and being sauntring about, a large, fierce bull-dog ran at me, seized me, and got me down, but only tore my clothes; how I was delivered I know not, for I do not remember any one near.

Being seven years of age, I contracted the abominable habit of cursing and swearing, which never left me till I was brought to know myself. Being of a passionate temper, (Oh, could I write it in tears of blood!) I frequently swore in a most dreadful manner; nor did I stick at lying: yet, young as I was, I was not without checks from God, and had I been under the care of any that knew how to manage me, it might have prevented many years of horrid impiety.

When between nine and ten years of age, my eldest brother took me to his house: designing I should be brought up to his business, *viz.* a Clothier. Nothing could have been more detestable to me. I abhorred the name of a Clothier; yea, I heartily despised both him and his trade. This being the case, I was not very studious to please him, which brought, what I thought, hard usuage upon me; and, after some time, I determined to decamp. But the query was, Whither should I go? This I knew not; for though I had several relations in good circumstances, yet I knew I should meet with a cold reception from any of them, when they knew I had run away from my brother. Nevertheless, being determined not to stay, my resolution was to go somewhere.

One morning, having done something amiss, rather by accident than design, I expected to meet with correction; and, to avoid it, set out fasting, about the middle of November. It was a hard frost, and I was in poor habit, having on the worst

clothes I had. I wandered all that day, not knowing (nor indeed much caring) what would become of me. I was very hungry, and sorely pinched with cold. I picked the heps from the hedge, and about eight o'clock at night came to another brother's house, eight or nine miles from where I set out in the morning. When I came there, though I was cold and hungry, I durst not for some time go in, as I was not in the dress of a visitor. However, at last I ventured in, and my reception was far more agreeable than I expected; the next day I was treated civilly, so that I begun to hope that I was to stay there, the thing I greatly desired But, alas! on the third day, I was escorted back to my former quarters, though much against my inclination. Nevertheless, I determined to make my escape again the first opportunity; which in a fortnight after I effected.

I remembered, my nurse used to shew great fondness for me, I therefore set out and marched thither, about nine or ten miles off, in the same garb in which I had fled before. Though I was received tolerably well, yet my dress shewed me to be a run-a-way; so that they were at a loss how to treat me. This was not far from that brother's house where I fled before, to whom I now paid another visit; but here I was treated roughly, and in a few days was, by main force, conducted back to the place from whence I came. Yet, I was determined not to stay there. But I thought I should succeed better, if I could decamp in a better dress; therefore I con-

sidered how to get some of my better clothes. I got a quantity of them together, and resolved to march by night, seeing there was no probability of doing it by day. This was a pretty daring attempt for a boy of ten years old. But the clothes were found before night, and the cause suspected, for which I underwent a severe beating. This was one of the worst methods which could have been taken; for it only confirmed my resolution not to stay. I then thought the likeliest way to effect my escape would be to go on a Sunday, when trimmed up in my best fashion. This I therefore resolved upon, and accordingly I put on two shirts that I might have a change; but unfortunately it was discovered as soon as I came down stairs, so that I was ordered to strip, and underwent again a severe discipline.

I was now a pretty close prisoner, and especially on Sundays. However, one Sunday, being equipt in my best, I waited all day for the opportunity, but could not get my hat: Finding that to be the case, I set out bare-headed, and ran for life; determining that night to go to my old nurse, and then to ramble where I should not be known. I got thither, and was vastly pleased with myself, thinking now I should gain my utmost desire; but while I sat by the fire, who should come riding to the door but my brother, who had taken horse and pursued me; and though it was now night, yet some people had taken notice while it was daylight, of a strange boy going in great haste without a hat. By this means he easily guest where I was

gone. Well; back again I was brought; but with as fixed a resolution as ever, that I would not stay. Being now almost a close prisoner, I was kept in mean habit; but that was nothing to me. A day or two after Christmas-day, I made my final escape. And now I entered upon a scene of distress indeed! What I endured from hunger and cold, no one knows but myself. My case was singular: I had relations living in affluence, on the right hand and on the left, while I should have been glad of the fragments which their servants, yea, perhaps, their dogs despised. That winter was particularly severe, and it was just in the depth thereof. My friends thought to starve me back again to my eldest brother; but I had an unconquerable aversion both to him and his trade. I would just remark here, the impropriety of fixing boys to any business so much against their inclinations: It seldom fares better with them, and sometimes proves their ruin.

Finding nothing could make me submit to return to my eldest brother, the other, to whose house I first fled, took me, and after some time put me out to a business that I less disliked, though not quite to my mind. Indeed my genius turned more for learning; but as I could not have my wish, I was willing to comply.

As I grew up, my habits of sin multiplied, and my mouth was fraught with oaths, lies, and deceit. I loved sinful recreations and foolish pastimes to an immoderate excess, and soon became a pretty dexterous gambler, especially at cards: And having

much pride and little money, was the more intent upon furnishing myself that way. I wished to associate with those whose circumstances were better than my own, and strove to equal them in dress and every thing else. During this time, the Spirit of God was not wanting to call me, and sometimes good resolutions took place for a season; but no sooner did a horse-race, or party of pleasure offer itself, than my resolutions died away, and I was worse again than ever: Yet I read the Bible, and got much light into many things. I knew I had not faith, and when at church (for I went to church sometimes) I durst not repeat the creed; for I knew I was no believer, and though I could lie at other times, I would not lie there. I likewise knew that I was not born again; but what the *new birth* was, I knew not; nor had I any to tell me. I knew I was far from being what I ought to be, but I thought I would be better when I was a little older.

When I was about seventeen, I heard that eminent servant of God, Mr. Whitfield. The first sight of his countenance struck me. There was an immense multitude, and his voice was like a trumpet. His text was, Rom. xiii. 11. *It is high time to wake out of sleep.* The whole of the discourse was attended with an amazing power, I believe to many: I am sure it was to me. When he addressed himself to the several ages of the large congregation before him, and among the rest, to the young people, *that* took great hold on me. I did not observe any thing extraordinary in what he said as to words; but there was such an unction

in his word as I had never felt before. I went home full of good resolutions, *now* to break off all my bad practices. But, alas! this also proved *as a morning cloud!* I was surrounded by such as were utterly abandoned: So I soon returned with the dog to his vomit. Nay, I was worse than ever; till happening to read the Pilgrim's Progress, I had another powerful visit from the Lord. But that also staid but a short time, for my passions hurried me on with surprizing impetuosity.

I now left off attending any place of worship, and gave full scope to every wretched disposition. I had a brother living at some distance, who had been awakened some time. But I had long taken my leave of him, as his conversation did not at all suit my inclination. I used to wrangle with him as well as I could, yet it generally left an impression upon my mind. But now, I never came near him, being wholly taken up with things of another kind. In the midst of my career I was very miserable; and when I was among my jovial companions, and saw every one around all joy and gladness, I was often exceedingly melancholy and dejected, though I assumed an air of cheerfulness. And often have I lain down in great terror with a "perhaps I may awake in hell?" A whim now came into my head to go into the army. And a party of horse being at this time recruiting in Wakefield, and an acquaintance of mine entering himself a volunteer, I needed but little solicitation to follow his steps. I therefore went to the officer, and being young and

pretty well made, was very acceptable. But upon trial, I was about half an inch beneath the standard, and therefore he could not take me.

This gave a check to my career in some measure; but I soon returned to my former conduct, abandoned to every thing my age and circumstances could admit of. I cannot say that drinking had much influence over me; yet I have been intoxicated several times; and once, not long before I was awakened, and coming home in the night with others, we had a ferry to cross; while the boat was coming, being bereaved of my senses, I stumbled, and had it not just then come to shore I should have tumbled into the water, and in all likelihood have been lost eternally. However, I took my leave of getting drunk, and do not remember *that* sin ever took me captive since. Nevertheless, in other respects I was as bad as ever, nay, even worse; for as I was now grown up, my habits of sin were stronger and more enlarged.

As I had given up going to any place of worship, so I had in a good measure dropped my reading too. But still my conscience was not quite asleep; I had very uneasy moments. But I ran into wild company and diversions as soon as I could; and it was a mercy that I had not more money, for that would have added fuel to the fire; and though nothing is impossible with God, yet in all human probability, I should never have been saved. Thus lay my poor soul in ruins, when in the beginning of the year, 1758, the Lord, by a kind chain of provi-

dences, was pleased to arrest me in my full career of sin.

There was a young man, with whom I had been a companion for several years: he had been in a fever, and during his illness had been awakened, and had contracted an acquaintance with the Independents. He persuaded me one Sunday to go hear their minister, which he was accustomed to hear, to oblige him I went. The text was, *They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.* While the preacher was describing the maladies of a sick soul, several drunken men came in, and were very rude. Partly with what the minister said, and partly by being struck with their behaviour, I never felt myself so affected in all my life. I plainly saw there must be a change, or I was undone for ever. Yet I cannot say that I was in such terror as might have been expected from so stubborn a sinner. The usual temptation awaited me when I came home; nor did I wholly escape free. But my desires and convictions continued all that week, and on Sunday I went to the same place of worship again; and I now plainly saw I must give up my companions, or I could not be saved. But here was a difficulty: though very young, I had contracted an acquaintance with a young person, who was as thoughtless as myself. Being brought up in the same neighbourhood, a fondness had insensibly stolen upon us both. But however, as I was determined to save my soul, and as she had a perfect antipathy to every thing of the kind, it

was not long before I got disentangled. so that snare was also broken.

I now began to cry unto God in private, but was sorely tempted the first time I went to my knees. I was afraid, either I should drop down dead, or the devil would appear to me, if not take me away. I frequently thought satan was behind me when I was praying, and was afraid to open my eyes lest I should see him. Indeed it is an exercise the devil does not love, and which he will use every means to prevent. I began now to contract an acquaintance with the people of the meeting, and was pretty much taken notice of by them. Several of them had been joined with the Methodists, and gave such an account of them that I had no desire of being acquainted with them. One Methodist lived near me, and had a public meeting at his house every Sunday evening, to which I sometimes went. He was useful to me, and might have been more so; but being more attached to the other people, I kept company with them only. *Alleine's Alarm** now fell into my hands. It described my case as exactly as if it had been wrote on purpose; so that I prized it above rubies. I began to have visits from the Lord, exceeding sweet to my soul; but no one said, "Now believe and thou shall be saved;" so that I was like Samuel, I knew not the voice of the Lord. I began now to meet with a good deal of opposi-

* This most useful book is now re-printed, and may easily be had: at that time I could not purchase at any price.

tion; my acquaintance laughed me to scorn, though whenever they came near me, the Lord opened my mouth in such a manner, that I could easily put them to silence. My master (for I was not yet out of my time) was sour and much out of humour at times. He, and others, whom I was in some measure under, had no objection to a reformation in me; but now they supposed I was as mad one way, as I had been the other. I continued to press forward, and the Lord continued to visit me with tastes of his love, which were exceeding precious to me. The time of Wakefield races drew on: many expected that my religion would then be at an end, as they knew how passionately fond I was of those lying vanities; and indeed I was not without fear myself, not that I found the least inclination to any thing of the kind, yet I knew not how it might be when the time came. But God took care of that; that fear was of his planting, and was a means of driving me nearer to himself.

One Lord's day evening, I was retired to my apartment for my usual exercise of reading and prayer. While I was calling upon the Lord, he appeared in a wonderful manner, as with his vesture dipt in blood. I saw him, by the eye of faith, hanging on the cross, and the sight caused such love to flow into my soul, that I believed that moment, and never since gave up my confidence. I had not then any particular promise applied; but was enabled to cast my soul upon that atoning sacrifice, which I saw was made for my offences. I

had nothing to trust in but the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel.—But,

Oh, the rapturous height,
Of that holy delight,
Which I found in the life-giving blood;
Of my Saviour possest,
I was perfectly blest,
As if filled with the fulness of God.

As I had no one near to tell them what God had done for my soul, I was in a short time brought into doubts: but yet I could not give up my confidence. Some time after the two following scriptures came to me with remarkable power: *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*, John x. 10. and again, Rev. xx. 6. *Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death shall have no power.* These two testimonies were indeed words in season, and very precious to my soul. I had some difficulties soon after to grapple with, and at times was brought to a low ebb; but still his grace was sufficient. I often thought if I was to live at Leeds, where there were such plenty of means, it would be almost as the gate of heaven to me: and in particular, I expected great assistance from the fellowship of those who were strong in grace. But God would have me dependent on himself alone; for though I went to Leeds, as I was of a shy disposition, I had no fellowship with

any one. I was then tempted to think there was not much life there: at least, I found very little. It was a very dull time with me, yet I kept close to God in prayer, and he kept my soul in a measure of peace.

From thence I removed to another place, where there were few that pretended to religion: I feared, lest now I should be overthrown; but I found here two or three methodists, who had preaching sometimes. I soon got among them, and often found it a blessing to my soul: particularly once in hearing that plain, honest man, Paul Greenwood, whose word left a lasting impression on my mind. But though I met with them at times, yet there was a discord in our manner of speaking, which prevented my close union. From thence I removed to Wakefield, where my first religious acquaintance lived, and with whom I had the greatest union. I kept on in much simplicity, watching unto prayer, and still found reading very profitable; as indeed it was from my first setting out.

But now a new scene opened: I began to think I was called to preach: this had in a measure been pressed upon my mind for some time; but whether it was a delusion from Satan, or a call from the Spirit of God, I knew not. I dreaded the thoughts of running before I was sent.

I likewise thought a preacher should have learning, which had been much neglected in me. But, however, the impression grew stronger and stronger. I wanted to recommend my Lord to ruined sinners,

and thought I could rejoice if I was torn in pieces for so doing. I had neither ease, nor honour, nor profit in view; but wanted to be an instrument in God's hands of saving souls. The word of the Lord was as a fire shut up in my bones. At the same time I was so conscious of my inability for the work, that I was ashamed to intimate my thoughts to any one. Oh, how have I agonized with God, not to suffer me to engage in such a work unless it was his will; and if it was, to point out my way? That aweful declaration Rev. xxii. 18, 19. stood seemingly in my way. *For I testify to every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* It is probable I might understand these words in too general a sense; but however, they seemed as if they pointed out a very narrow path for a gospel minister to go in; and made me cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

But God answered for himself from the first of Jeremiah: *Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God,*

*behold I cannot speak, for I am a child!* (My very objection!) *But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord; then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold I have put my words into thy mouth.* Now, if any passage was ever applied to any one by the Spirit of God, surely this was to me. Therefore, I determined to make the attempt; but still I knew not how to set about it; for I was ashamed to declare my mind to any one, from a sense of my absolute unfitness for the work. I had never spoken a word in the way of exhortation, but had frequently prayed in public. At length, one or two of my acquaintance asked me if I did not think I was called to preach? With much confusion, I answered in the affirmative.

From that time I determined to make an attempt; but the question was, Where? At last I resolved to begin on a Sunday evening, and pitched upon a very profane place to make my first effort; thinking an ignorant place was the fittest for an ignorant preacher. When I came within sight of the village, my spirit was ready to sink within me; not for fear of persecution (though the place was rude enough) but from a sense of the importance of the undertaking. When I came to the place, the heart of the honest man who had invited me failed him; therefore I found his house was shut up. This

rather damped me; but another door being immediately set open, I went in. A house full of people gathered; I stood up, sung a hymn and prayed, but did not give out a text; for as I had never before opened my mouth to exhort in public, I did not know whether I could say any thing or no. But I found assistance in giving a word of exhortation, and I believe it was accompanied with the power of God to many present. I appointed to go again the next Sunday, and then chose Matthew v. 3. for a text, and found life and liberty in speaking, and a blessing attended it.

The tidings of my preaching soon reached the congregation where I was a hearer, and happening to have no preacher the following Lord's-Day, they requested that I would supply the place of one.—This was a hard task, for there were several whom I was much afraid to stand up before; however I durst not decline the offer. I spoke from John i. 29. Here again my mouth was opened, and my tongue was loosed, so that they objected nothing: undoubtedly they made allowance for a young raw speaker. Being now in some measure satisfied that I ought to speak in God's name, I embraced many opportunities of going to several places.

I now wanted to improve my little smattering of learning, and having a trifle of money, I entirely devoted myself to that purpose, not knowing nor caring how I might be disposed of, only I wanted to be useful.

After some time, being destitute of a Minister at

the place where I was a hearer, they desired I would accept the place; accordingly, I undertook to preach to them awhile, till we should see a little farther. The congregation was but a small one;—however, I had the satisfaction to see it increase, and some poor sinners were convinced. But some of the leading men having frequently veered about from one system to another, seemed now mightily charmed with Antinomianism. Dr. Crisp and Mr. Saltmarsh's works were highly approved of, and some of Dr. Gill's writings. But a Mr. Relly was the great Apostle among them, on account of his famous Hymn-book! and his Treatise of the Union of Christ and his Church. He came into the country a few weeks, and by him I was much blinded, and for a time all seemed right which he advanced. But in one particular sermon he explained his sentiments freely, when I was fully satisfied that he had sadly perverted the truth. I went to him the next day, and ventured to object against what he had advanced the preceding night. He was not prepared to answer some things which I had objected, but attempted to puzzle me by starting other questions. I gained but little satisfaction from this interview: but still I was rather tinctured with Antinomianism; yet, I laboured to live near to God, I earnestly begged to be entirely right, both in principle and practice.

A particular providence now occasioned my coming among the Methodists: I went one time to hear

Mr. Whitfield, and a certain Preacher* who was with him, I was informed, was to preach the next Lord's-Day; it came into my mind to hear him, as the time did not interfere with our time of worship. When I went, I was amazingly struck, to find him in a far more evangelical strain than I expected.—I had now and then gone to hear the Methodists before, but was generally disgusted. But the present sermon had quite a different effect. I was now more reconciled to the Methodists than I had been, and began to be acquainted with the people. Reprobation was what I never could digest, and I was not without my doubts concerning final Perseverance; but could not endure to hear it spoken against. But I was most rooted in imputed Righteousness, taking it for granted it was true, because Mr. Hervey had wrote in its defence.

About this time, being invited to preach in the Methodist Preaching-house, I accepted the invitation. This gave great offence to my own people, several of whom were run-a-away Methodists.—Meantime I began to think of joining the Methodists, which my congregation suspected; the heads of them met me, and made me some offers in a temporal way. But I told them I thought providence called me to an itinerant life, and wished them to look out for one who might suit them. As I knew few of them would go with me, I recommended Mr. Ingham to them, who had formed an itinerancy,

* Mr. Hanby.

and wrote to Mr. Ingham myself on their behalf. He came, and several of the Preachers in his connexion; but as Mr. Ingham's people soon after broke in pieces, the Meeting relapsed into its former state of independency. Being now disengaged, I preached up and down among the Methodists. But being in principle partly a Calvinist, and having been accustomed to read Calvinian books, their phrases were become very familiar to me. However, I aimed at doing good, and when any of the Preachers were sick, or had any where to go, I readily supplied their place; and I have reason to believe my labour was not in vain.

The summer being arrived, and Mr. Wesley coming into the country, I met him at Birstal. He received me with that affability and condescension which he was so remarkable for. I heard him preach in several places; but I cannot say that I could cordially receive the doctrine of perfection. As the Conference was drawing near, he advised me to attend it at London. I intimated a desire of spending a year in that place, that I might be fully informed both in the doctrines and discipline of the Methodists. Accordingly I disposed of some small effects which I had, and set out on foot. When I came thither, I expected to have undergone a close examination, with regard to my principles, experience and ability; and therefore, as I did not in every thing agree with Mr. Wesley it was a doubt with me whether I should not be rejected.—But to my surprise, I was not asked one question,

relative to any of these things; but was appointed for Wales, and was the only travelling preacher of our connexion in those parts. This I have sometimes thought was not prudently done, as I was but just come into the connexion. However I set out for Bristol, and so into Wales; and truly a rough region it was. A preacher at Bristol said to me, "You seem pretty well dressed, and will hold out well enough for a year; but you must expect nothing to buy any more clothes when those are worn out." However I did not regard that, for I was determined to spend and be spent in doing all the good I could. I therefore began preaching out of doors in the first town I came to, which was Chepstow, and determined to do so in every town I came to. Thus I went on till after Christmas, and endured a good deal of hardship from hunger and cold; especially in passing those dreadful mountains from Neath to Brecon, which were near forty miles over, and have a most dismal aspect in winter; on which I travelled a long way, and saw neither house nor field, hedge nor tree; nor yet any living creature, excepting here and there a poor sheep or two, nor scarcely any visible track to know my way by. This was not pleasing to flesh and blood; but still I determined to go on.

In February, there seemed a prospect of much good in a large tract of land called Gower, in Glamorganshire; the inhabitants of it were nearly heathens. I went down into this miserable country, in very cold, rainy weather; the people flocked to

hear, but we were ill provided with convenient places to preach in. Meantime the rain was excessive, and the cold intense, while we had but little fire; so that I put on my wet clothes several days successively, yet without any inconvenience afterwards. Here God blessed my word: I collected several societies, and many were at this time brought to experience the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins.

Towards summer, a circumstance seemed to open my way sixty or seventy miles farther down to Pembrokeshire; I went thither, and preached at Carmarthen in my way. Afterwards I preached at Pembroke, and had multitudes to hear, who behaved in a respectful manner, and generously cleared all my expences; for at this time there was no provison made for Missionaries. I preached in several places round Milfordhaven, and had many to hear. Indeed the prospect was so promising, and the people so loving, that I was almost tempted to embrace their pressing invitations to stay with them. But I thought that would be betraying my trust; so I returned to my own circuit, promising that I would return again after the Conference was over. When I returned into the old circuit I was seized with a slow fever. I believe it was in some measure occasioned by fatigues. But providence was kind to me; for though as I was in a poor place, where little assistance was to be had, yet by the blessing of God I did without it. Mr. Mather then came from Staffordshire, to help me to put things

into some order, and went with me through the rambling circuit; which indeed has been of use to me in some respects ever since.

I attended the Conference at Leeds, in August, 1762, and was sent back into Pembrokeshire. But though I had three hundred miles to ride, and a new work to begin, I had nothing allowed me either to take me thither, or support me when I got there. But of this I took no care; and through a kind providence, I wanted nothing. Another preacher being sent into the old circuit, I had my full scope in the new one. Things turned out beyond my expectation. The Lord blessed the word. I several times visited the societies in Gower, which I joined the year before; for the other preacher had not time. I endured a good deal of hardship and danger in passing and repassing from Gower to Pembrokeshire, in winter; there being several dangerous waters to cross. Sometimes a stranger is surrounded by the tides, whilst he is crossing the sands, and knows nothing of the matter, till he find himself hemmed in on every side. This I once narrowly escaped. I had once a pretty long day's journey, when coming to one of the ferries, which is a mile over, I found the boat was broke. I had nine miles to ride up to Carmarthen, where the bridge was, and nine miles on the other side back again; this added eighteen miles to my journey. I just got over the last ferry in the evening; but which was my road I knew not, and the people could not or would not speak

English. But they pointed me up a dark lane, which at length brought me to a wild mountain. It being quite dark, I knew not which way to go; for there was no road. At length my mare sunk down in a bog and stuck fast. Here I was at a loss what to do; for if I left her it was ten to one if I should find her again. As I knew not which way to go for help, I shouted and hollowed till I was weary; but to no purpose. I pitied the poor creature, that after so long and fatiguing a journey, had such a stable at night.

After some time I took hold of the bridle, and pulled her head; being strong, she made a vigorous struggle, and got her fore-parts above ground, and after taking breath made another stout spring, and got entirely free. At this I was not a little glad; but not knowing the ground, I judged it safest to lead her after me. I was weary, cold, and hungry, and where or when my journey should end I knew not. At length I discovered something like a house, at which I was exceeding glad; but my joy was soon over; for making up to it, I found it an old ruin uninhabited; so my poor, weary companion and I set out again.

At last, I saw a man, and prevailed upon him, for six-pence, to shew me the way from the common, which was not a quarter of a mile; for it happened I had come the direct road. But when I came to the place I aimed at, some time in the night, there was nothing to eat, for either man or horse. I got the poor beast to a farm-house at

some distance. My lodging was but indifferent, but yet very agreeable, as I was very weary, and I know not that either I or my beast ailed any thing after we had got into good quarters.

The Lord prospered my undertaking in Pembrokeshire; so that by Christmas I had eight or nine societies. And as the people were remarkably loving, my time went on comfortably. 'Tis true, I often met with things not agreeable; for I was continually ranging about to beat up fresh ground, and Wales is not the most pleasing part of the world for a stranger to wander in; especially on the errand which I was upon. But I cared very little about the matter, provided I could see some fruit of my labour. I could rest very well upon straw, when needful, and be well content.

A little before the Conference, I went to Tenby, which had held out stoutly for their master, and boasted no preachers had ever come there, neither should they but at the price of their lives. I was determined to make the attempt: So a few friends accompanied me, one Sunday morning, from Pembroke. We arrived there by eight o'clock, and after putting up our horses, went to the cross. I gave out the hundredth psalm: The people flocked together amain, and all behaved very well: But they cut a strange figure; some looking through their windows naked as they had jumped out of bed; some running to the cross with part of their clothes on, &c. After singing and praying without interruption, I then gave out my text, and all

was quite still. By and by I observed a person, with an air of importance, walking up and down, who, I soon learned, was the Mayor. He would fain have got some of the crowd to pull me down, but all the people stood staring with their mouths and eyes open, as if they would have devoured every word. Finding the town's people took no notice of him, he addressed a company of sailors who stood by themselves; desiring they would take that fellow down. But the honest tars answered in their own stile, "The devil shall take him down for us." He then fetched out the Riot Act, and came into the midst of the crowd to read it; so I ceased speaking until he had concluded. I asked if he had done reading? He said he had. Well, then, said I, I will begin again; so I went on and concluded in peace. After sermon the constables came to fetch me before the Mayor. When I came thither I found the rector, the curate, and the town-clerk there. Mr. Mayor insisted I had been making a riot: I denied the charge, and desired him to prove it. He said, he would not stand proving the matter with me; but, says he, "Shew your authority, or to prison you shall go." I told him, "I have been preaching, and have licence so to do," which I then produced. This being read, "These Justices,* said he, are methodists, every one of them." "Well, but is this all you have to shew!" I answered, Yes; then

*. The Justices who signed the licence.

said he, you must go to prison. Let his *mittimus* be made out. For which purpose, pen, ink and paper were brought. But he was informed there was an Act of Toleration: This was produced; in which it was asserted, that a qualified preacher might preach in either house, field or other place. This seemed to puzzle Mr. Mayor a little; and he thought it best to dismiss me, on condition that nothing of the kind might be attempted again. I told him, I intended to preach again at two o'clock, which I did to well nigh all the town, and had no interruption. I went again that day fortnight, and preached three times, and had very large congregations each time. Presently after, I left the country, and must confess I cannot help blaming those who came after me, for not following the blow. I was much importuned to stay in the country. However, I tore myself from them, and hastened to the London Conference.

From thence I was appointed for Castlebar, in Ireland, and made the best of my way thither. As I sailed up Bristol Channel, I looked with a wishful eye to Pembrokeshire; and if I could have got on shore, I should have been tempted to stay with them. But we stretched over for Dublin; where I stayed near a fortnight, and preached with some degree of satisfaction, especially in the Royal Square, belonging to the barracks, where many of the soldiers attended and behaved remarkably well, as they do in every place in Ireland. As we seldom preach in country places in Ireland, the people

being generally papists, and often strangers to English, except in the North; so in towns there are always soldiers quartered, and generally some in society. From Dublin I set out for Castlebar, quite on the other side the kingdom, preaching at Drumcree, Athlone, Augrim, and Holy Mount by the way, and found the people very hospitable and loving, as that is the case indeed, all over Ireland, wherever I have been; so that if in every thing the Irish excelled as they do in freedom and hospitality, we might give it its ancient name, viz. *A nation of saints.* Being arrived at Castlebar, my principal place, I found myself not only in another country, but amongst another sort of people. Instead of having crowds following me, as in Pembrokeshire, I was shut up in a little dark corner, and had but three small congregations in the circuit; and being entirely surrounded by papists, there was no probability of enlarging my sphere of action; for they neither understood English, nor durst they come to hear if they had been ever so desirous. Here I was warmer than wise, in my zeal against the papists; and had it not been for three troops of dragoons who lay in the town, and were constant hearers, I know not but I should have paid for my *rashness.* It is certainly beginning at the wrong end with the general run of roman catholics, to attack their principles, as it raises prejudice in them immediately, and then all reasoning is at an end. If we mean to do them good, it must be by lovingly introducing the

experimental and practical parts of religion. I once preached out of doors, at a place called Drumasnare, at the time of a papist visitation, and a large concourse of people; here I imprudently entered into the controversies of priestly absolution, purgatory, transubstansiation, praying to saints, &c. This was ill-timed, and only stirred up rage and indignation. Some of my friends were alarmed expecting some mischief would ensue, either openly or secretly; and I was not without apprehension; but I received no harm, and learned to be wiser; for I see we must not provoke them we aim to profit.

Finding I could not enlarge my bounds of preaching, I determined to improve my little learning. I did not like to be at the mercy of every pretender, with regard to the original scriptures, and was much excited to aim at a little more knowledge by reading Mr. Wesley's Address to the Clergy. I saw every reason assigned for their knowing Greek and Hebrew, was doubly applicable to me. Indeed it was my desire, from the time of my first engaging in the work of God, to shew myself approved unto God, a workman, that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Very providentially, there was a grammar-school in Castlebar, in which some gentlemen's sons were instructed in the learned languages.—The master very freely assisted me; so that I preached night and morning, devoted the forenoon

to study, and spent the afternoon in visiting the sick, and reading English; and the evening I spent with my friendly school-master. This has proved very useful to me ever since. Some good was done during my stay here; the numbers in societies were a little increased, and the congregations much enlarged.

From hence I removed into the Athlone circuit. I still attended unto my studies, but had not the same opportunities as before. I here got a sore illness by laying in a damp bed,* so that my speech and hearing were well nigh taken from me. But this was a necessary visitation, and what my carelessness deserved. However, when I was able, I preached abroad in most of the towns, and I hope not in vain: Though I did not live so near to God as I ought to have done.

My next remove was to Corke. Here a blessed work was begun under that indefatigable servant of God, Mr. Pennington. It did not decrease during my stay, but increased more abundantly. I preached abroad in every part of the city. Prayer-meetings were regularly kept up. I met the class-leaders every Saturday night, and appointed each his work for the ensuing week. Strict discipline was observed: Not a class-leader or steward was permitted to enter the society, without producing his ticket: And the work of the Lord prospered on

* This, I believe, has been the death of several of the preachers, and yet how few of the people are careful in this point?

every side. In this agreeable manner things went on, when Mr. James Morgan came to help me. He was the older preacher, though the care of things was, in some measure, committed to me. I could soon see a party gathering against me, who did not like that strictness of discipline. At length he insisted on a person's being admitted to the love-feasts and society-meetings who would not meet in class; this I could not admit of. I insisted on poor and rich meeting in class, or not to have any privilege of meeting in society. Letters were sent to Mr. Wesley, and his answers were construed in their favour. However, I stood to what I saw was right. They then alledged, her husband would not let her meet in class. To cut off this pretence, I went and asked him if he did hinder her? His answer was, She is at her own liberty: Then Mr. M. was obliged to submit. This, however, caused a shyness betwixt Mr. M. and myself, which cast a damp upon the work. Yet I kept up, at all events, the same discipline as long as I staid at Corke.

At the beginning of the year 1765, I removed to Limerick, here I found matters in a very different state to what I found them in Corke. They were very languid and lifeless, my own spirit was rather irritated, so that I did not see much fruit, except at a place called Killfinnen. In July I came over to England, to the Manchester Conference. After seeing some of my relations in Yorkshire, I set out for Scotland, preaching at Kighley,

Blackburn, Kendall, and Cockermouth, so on to Dumfries, the first town of note in Scotland. Resting on the Sunday at Dumfries, I preached in the Ball-room, the day being rainy, so that I could not preach out of door. Here I was much importuned to stay; but my destination was to Glasgow. When I arrived, I entered on a scene I had never done before. The winter was at hand; I was in a strange land; no society; no place of entertainment; no place to preach in; no friend to communicate my mind to. I took a private lodging, and gave out that I should preach on the Green, a place of public resort, hard by the city. A table was carried to the place, and at the appointed time I went and found two baker's boys and two old women waiting. My very soul sunk within me, I had travelled by land and by water near six hundred miles to this place; and behold my congregation! Well, I turned upon my heel to go away. No one can tell, but they who have experienced it, what a task it is to stand out in the open air, to preach to nobody! More especially in such a place as Glasgow. However, at length I mounted my table, and began to sing, which I had entirely to myself. A few more kept creeping together, all seemingly very poor people, till at length I had about two hundred hearers. But this was poor encouragement. The night following, I had a more promising congregation; yet nothing to what I expected. The third night we had heavy rain: This quite cast me down again.

Oh, what a day of distress was that! I had not learned in all states to be content. The enemy assaulted me sorely, so that I was ready to cry out, "it is better for me to die than to live." But God pitied my weakness; the next day cleared up, and I was never prevented from preaching out of doors for eleven or twelve weeks after.

On the Saturday evening I had a large congregation, and on Sunday morning a larger; but such a one on Sunday evening, as I do not remember ever seeing before, excepting one. I mounted my table, but was quite too low. I set a chair upon it, but was quite too low still; I then mounted upon a high wall, and cried aloud, *The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.* All was still as night, so that I conceived great hopes of this opportunity: But when I had done, they made a lane for me to walk through the huge multitude, while they stood staring at me; but no one said, Where dwellest thou? I walked home much dejected.

One great obstacle in my way was, a new edition of the Eleven Letters, ascribed to Mr. Hervey, just come out, prefaced by a Minister in Edinburgh, a man much esteemed in Scotland. These letters fully answered their design. They carried gall and wormwood wherever they came. So that it was a sufficient reason for every one to keep their distance because I was connected with Mr. Wesley. I laboured to keep as clear as possible of

controversy, dwelling chiefly upon repentance, faith, and the new-birth. Indeed, as I then leaned much both to imputed righteousness and final perseverance, I had no temptation to bring in controversy.

I soon found that persons may easily learn to con over several gospel topics; such as original sin, the offices of Christ, his being the only Saviour, and the like; and yet, be haughty, self-sufficient, unbroken-hearted sinners. This I saw, and levelled all my powers against it. I soon found their pharisaic hearts could not stand it. Hence I drew their resentment upon me, and plenty of lies and calumnies were soon spread abroad.

I continued preaching night and morning, when opportunity offered; and tried much to procure a place to preach in, as the winter was now come on. I believe I was disappointed in ten or twelve different places. I sold my horse, and a preacher who passed through Glasgow, to Ireland, having his horse lamed, and little money left, I spared about three guineas to help him on his way. This brought my stock into a small compass; and having every thing to pay for, I was reduced to a short allowance. I paid three shillings per week for my room, fire, and attendance; but I really kept a very poor house. I confess, that I never kept so many fast-days, either before or since. But how to keep up my credit was a difficulty, for I was afraid my landlady would think me either poor or covetous; I frequently desired her not to provide any thing for dinner, and

a little before noon, I dressed myself, and walked out, till after dinner, and then came home to my hungry room, with a hungry belly. However, she thought I had dined out some where; so I saved my credit.

About this time a poor man was executed for the murder of his wife; I attended him several weeks in the prison, and likewise at his execution, which had a circumstance I never saw before; they chopped off his right-hand, before his execution, with a great axe, just as a butcher would chop a piece of beef with a cleaver. This is the law of Scotland, for every murderer to have his right-hand struck off before his execution, and to be stuck upon the pole where he is gibbetted. As I had reason to believe the Lord had plucked him as a brand from the burning, I published a short account of his case. It is amazing what a cry this raised up against me, to say that God had mercy on such a sinner! Scurrilous papers were cried up and down the streets against me, filled with lies of all sorts. Nay, so zealous was some poor creature, that he began publishing weekly numbers, and had no better subject than myself. My case was now deplorable; I had famine within doors, and plenty of reproach without. And yet I might have prevented it all; for just at this time there was an elegant place of worship building, called *A Kirk of Relief*. Formerly the inhabitants of Scotland had the privilege of choosing their own ministers; this privilege they are now debarred of, and the gift of a

living lies in the hands of a patron. But frequently the parishioners unite, build a place of worship, which they term, A Kirk of Relief, and call a minister themselves; leaving the old kirk to the patron and his friend. This was the case in Glasgow; the church was built, but they had not chosen their minister. One of their leading men was one of my greatest intimates. He said, he would engage me three hundred votes, which would be a majority. This was an alluring bait, considering my present circumstances; a place of one hundred and forty pounds per annum, with honour and credit, on one hand, and hunger and contempt on the other. But I thought it would be betraying the trust which was reposed in me. Afterwards some of that party desired a meeting with me; but I so satisfied them, that I heard no more from that quarter.

At length I procured a place to preach in, and my hearers furnished it with pulpit and seats. I saw now a little fruit of my labour: As I had a place to preach in, so a little society, which kept continually increasing; some of whom stand to this day, while others are gone to rest.

I observed above, how kind providence was in the weather; for though it was a remarkable wet season, yet I never was but once prevented preaching abroad till the middle of November, and which was then only one night: so that it became a kind of proverb among the people. "If it rain all day, it will be fair at night for the *load*, i. e. the lad, to preach on the Green."

One little circumstance I cannot omit.—— Some time after my arrival at Glasgow, I found myself at a loss for singing, having but a poor voice for singing: And as the people knew nothing of our hymns, I was obliged to sing the Scotch psalms; yet being frequently at a loss, one of my hearers told me, if I pleased, he would by my Precentor, that is, my Clerk, to lead off the psalms. At this I was glad; so we went on pretty well: but at length he made a demand of thirteen shillings and four-pence, for his work, which was just four-pence a time. This did but ill suit my circumstances.— However, I paid him his demand, and dismissed him and the Scotch psalms together. I now began to sing our own hymns; the people liking them right well, and in a little time, I taught them to sing several of our hymn tunes.

After the Society was increased to forty or fifty, some of them began to inquire how I was maintained? They asked me if I had an estate; or some supplies from England? I told them I had neither; but having sold my horse, I had made what little I had go as far as I could. I then explained our custom to them. I told them of the little matter we usually received from our people. The poor, dear souls, were much affected, and they very liberally supplied my wants, as also those that came after me. I staid with them till the middle of April, and then bid them an affectionate farewell; leaving about seventy persons joined together. Though I had many trials in Glasgow, yet I had much oppor-

tunity to pursue my study; and the privilege of the College library was of singular advantage to me. But I own I did not live so near to God, the latter part of my time, as I did in the beginning. I seldom enlarge my acquaintance, but I find it enlarges my temptations; so I found cause to cry out, Lord, pardon my trifling, and want of deep seriousness!

From hence I went to Edinburgh, and in my way turned aside to Stirling, where I spent three nights. On the Sunday, preaching under the side of an old uninhabited building, some young men got into the inside, and going up stairs, threw off a number of the slates; but though they fell just by me, I was not hurt, nor any one else. Leaving Stirling, I came to Edinburgh, where the brethren received me gladly. The Octagon was not quite finished, but the congregation was miserably small. Several things had concurred to reduce both the society and the congregation, particularly the afore-mentioned letters. I had soon the pleasure of seeing the congregation increase, yet not as I could wish; the place was never above half filled, even on Sunday evenings. I was therefore determined to take a new step.

The Castle-hill being the place of general rendezvous of all sorts of people, after they come out of the churches, about twelve o'clock: I was determined to preach there just at that time: It was something disagreeable to stand up bare-headed in the blazing sun; but this I regarded not. My

method was to preach in the Octagon in the morning, on the Castle-hill at noon, in the High School-yard at four o'clock, and in the Octagon at six in the evening. As I generally spake with all my might, this was rather too hard for my constitution. However, by this means, I got the Octagon well filled on Sunday evenings, and helped the society a little. In order to establish Societies betwixt Edinburgh and Glasgow, I preached in several towns which lie between, such as Burrowstounness, Linlithgow, Falkirk, and Killsyth; but I fear with little fruit. The Scots are naturally shy, and suspicious of strangers, and any thing in religion, that appears new, or not agreeing with their established forms, they are exceeding jealous of. Hence class-meeting has the appearance of novelty, and has often been suspected to border a little upon the popish auricular confession of sins, though a different thing; hence many in Scotland have been startled at it, and very loth to engage in the same. Therefore I firmly believe it would answer much better in Scotland to form societies without insisting upon their meeting in class, and we should be very likely to do them much more good. For though a few will meet, yet they never speak their minds freely; and therefore it is a sort of forced business, and is in danger of runing it into a mere form, and then we had as good do nothing.

In October, I left my much-esteemed friends at Edinburgh, and removed to Aberdeen. In crossing the Forth, which is seven miles from Leith to King-

horn, I know not that I was ever nearer being drowned. There were several friends from Edinburgh, and it being an exceeding fine calm morning, the regular passage-boat being gone, we hired a small pinnace; but when we were about half way over, such a sudden squall of wind arose, that we were in danger of being overset every minute.—But by a merciful providence we got safe over. That evening I arrived at Dundee, and preached three nights, having the place well filled with attentive hearers each night. At Aberdeen, I met with a loving people; but as the winter was at hand, I had no opportunity of enlarging my sphere of action. I was therefore determined to apply myself to study, and to live nearer to God than I had done. But a family residing in Aberdeen, which came from Leeds, I immediately contracted an acquaintance with them; and this lead me into company, which was a great loss to my soul. After I had spent some time, being fully convinced of my danger, I judged it best to flee; and a ship being ready to sail for Leith, I went on board immediately, taking an abrupt leave. Having scarce any wind, we had a very tedious passage, as we could but make little way; but I never was with such a ship's company before. Every one on board, both sailors and passengers, came upon deck to prayers, and all kneeled down, except the man at the helm. After a slow passage we reached Leith. I hastened to Edinburgh, anxious to see my friends; the generality of whom were glad to see me.

As soon as the season would permit, Mr. Oliver, being my colleague, we took our station on the Castle-hill, hoping for the same success which I had the last summer. But a circumstance happened which hindered the usefulness of me and my fellow-labourer.

There had been, a few years before, a young man in that College, who met in our society. He appeared to be much alive to God, and was the leader of one of the classes. He had now been in England for some time, had got ordained, turned Predestinarian, and affected a popular character. He now came to Edinburgh, partly to do *us* harm, and partly for another purpose. In the latter design he failed; but in the former he was too successful. He would not preach in our place, nor even come to hear us: But preached at our usual times; and by this means drew away much people from us. There was neither matter nor method in his preaching; but he was loud and quaint; so he was much admired. It has fared with him as it has done with several others. He first turned Calvinist, and then to nothing. It is plain, a man with little parts, and little religion, may do that harm in a short time, which men of far greater parts, and deeper religion cannot repair in a long time. For though my colleague, who was a man of good abilities, and did all in his power, as well as myself, yet could we not either prevent or remove the harm which one shallow young man was doing.

During my stay in Edinburgh this season, my

time went on but heavily; I saw little good done; the congregations were but small, and the society was very cold, and did not encrease. It is really very heavy with me when I see God's work at a stand, every thing has but a gloomy aspect; my spirit sinks, and my soul is pained within me.

In September, 1767, I left Edinbuagh, and, at Dunbar, was seized with an obstruction in my bowels, which seemed to threaten me with a final period to my feeble labours. I do not remember ever passing so dreadful a night. Being very providentially in the house of Dr. Hamilton, he took the right method with me, and in a few days I was enabled to set forward, though it was some time before I got quit of the effects of that attack. The kind and genteel usage I received both from the Dr. and Mrs. Hamilton, will not soon be obliterated from my sensible and grateful heart.

I preached at Alnwick, Newcastle, Darlington, and Knaresborough, and so on in divers parts in Yorkshire, being glad to see my native country and former acquaintance, and they appeared equally glad to see me. Blessed be God for christian fellowship, and for christian friendship! It hath a tendency to soothe some of the rugged paths which we meet with in this howling wilderness, and perhaps may encrease our gratitude in the bright realms of eternal day!

Before I dismiss Scotland, I would just take notice, that I have reason to bless God, some good was done by my poor endeavours, some sinners

have been brought to God, my labours, in the general, were acceptable, and they gave me many proofs of their friendship, although my entrance among them was rather unpromising. But on the other hand, I see much cause for humility and deep self-abasement: I see I might have managed my mission abundantly better; I really was neither so holy or steady as I might have been. I have reason to cry, and also to apply, to the blood of sprinkling, or yet I should be an outcast from God, and heir of eternal misery.

This makes me now with bended knees,
Thy daily care implore;
Confine me Lord, if it thee please,
And let me rove no more.

O cause the golden girdle, love,
To bind my heart to thine;
Let me thy little captive prove,
Become thy spoil divine.

I'll bless my sweet captivity,
The cord that binds me fast
To him, who living loved me,
And died for me at last.

My next remove was to Chester; where a change took place of such consequence to me, that I should be much wanting in my gratitude to a kind providence if I passed it over in silence. I found it was expedient for me to marry, but it appeared a matter of great importance. Only two things in all my life had given me greater concern, namely, my

acceptance with God, and my call to preach. What I wanted was, a person of grace, of good understanding, of a good natural disposition, for my own is violent; and one who had been well educated. I had contracted an acquaintance with one while in the city of Corke, in whom I had reason to believe the above properties met; she was descended from an eminent French protestant family, whose grandfather, among many others, had fled from the rage of Lewis XIV. and had left his estate behind, only taking what effects he could along with him. She was early bereaved of her father, and not long after of her mother. My great objection was, the bringing a person of her delicate constitution and education into such a way of life, as she must expect if she became my wife. This I feared would be more than her spirits could bear. Besides, I found a great aversion to bring any more burdens upon the societies; for as she was left an orphan, her affairs were very ill managed, yet, believing it to be the will of God, I at length ventured upon this important step; for which I have abundant reason to bless God, and hope I shall do it for ever.

Here I became acquainted with that amiable pattern to all young females, I mean Miss Gilbert, born in the West-Indies, and was come to England to finish her education, and also to finish her life in the bloom of her days. She kept a daily journal for several years, and at the age of seventeen, a fever sent her to Abraham's bosom. I visited her in her illness, and was therefore a witness to that

sweet resignation and consolation which she was favoured with. At the request of her friends I preached a funeral sermon on the occasion, from the affecting words of our Saviour; Luke xxiii. 28. *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me; but weep for yourselves, and your children.*

The chapel was much crowded, and the congregation was much affected. I printed the sermon, which I hope has been a word in season to many a troubled soul.

Before the end of the year, I preached one Sunday morning in the market-place at Salop, and met with no other molestation, than a few clods and small stones. So I gave notice that I would preach again in the evening, at a place called the Quarry. We will be ready for you, said they; and so they were; for when I drew near the place, there was a little army gathered together with stakes or clubs. They did not stay till I came to the place; but came on furiously, so that I was soon hemmed in on every side. They seemed a little at a stand, when I demanded to know what they wanted? However they rallied, and though they did not *strike* me, they *kicked* me about to some purpose. By degrees they hurried me into the town, up to the door of a house, which belonged to a justice of peace. I thought there might be something providential in this; and took the liberty of going in to desire his protection. The justice was at the coffee-house, but I sent for him; the mob by this time had filled the street, and were roaring like lions. At

length the justice came. He said, "Tell me who have hurt you; and I will send for a warrant for them;" and after a little incoherent talk, fairly shoved me out of doors, into the midst of the mob. Providence held them from striking, or a very few blows might have ended the business. I likewise kept on my feet, for if I had once been down, there was no likelihood I should have risen again. But I was covered with dirt from head to foot. All the filth they could scrape up was thrown, and when I attempted turning may face on one side, I met it on the other. Which way to go I knew not, nor indeed could I go any way, but just as my masters drove me. At length I heard some cry out; "for shame, for shame;" this occasioned a quarrel among themselves. Mean time, an honest man opened his door: so I slipt in, and went out by a back way, not much hurt, but dreadfully bedaubed; so that I really "needed much washing to be touched."

The next year, the society in Dublin being in much confusion, Mr. Wesley desired me to go thither. My affectionate partner was in a very unfit situation for crossing the water. The ship was so crowded, that we could obtain no beds, though they had been promised us; yet they were taken up before we got on board, so that it was no small grief to me, to see my dear partner, three days and nights, and not a place where to lay her head. When we got thither, I was in great hopes, for several weeks, the desired end would be accomplished.

But my former antagonist coming to Dublin, who had been the occasion of the confusion, I had all my work to do over again. But he is gone, and I hope to paradise. There I shall leave him; but he occasioned my path to be very rough in Dublin*.

Notwithstanding some cross things, I met with many friends, who shewed themselves very affectionate and loving; and did every thing in their power to strengthen my hands, and help me in whatever I stood in need of, and to comfort my afflicted wife. The Lord reward them for their kindness in that great day.

While we were there, my wife was delivered of her first child; and not being skilfully treated, she had such a complaint in her breast as was supposed to be a confirmed cancer. The anguish which I saw her daily in, was such an affliction to me, as I never experienced before. This continued nine months, during which, every means was tried which could be devised. At length, partly by a very abstemious diet, partly by taking quicksilver, with the application of boiled hemlock outwardly, through the blessing of God, a perfect cure was effected. But before this we removed to Corke, leaving our infant above an hundred miles from us; but though the nurse was a papist, I have reason to believe she did her duty to the child.

* Though it was my misfortune not to agree with Mr. Morgan; yet there were many excellent things in him, such as I wish to imitate; and my reason for mentioning the above, is to caution myself and others against discord.

I found Corke was not as I had left it, about four years ago. Then every thing appeared lively; now, alas! all was dull and languid, the prayer-meetings were dropped; discipline was not kept up, and the society was much decayed. I laboured with my might to revive the former flame; but, how hard is it to regain the ground which is lost!

A little before I left Corke, I was at Bandon one Sunday. It happened there was to be a review on the Monday, of a regiment of light-horse. While I was preaching, in the street, Colonel Walpole, and all the officers came, and behaved in a most indecent manner. On my speaking to them, the Colonel ordered four trumpeters from the barracks into the middle of the congregation, and commanded them to sound. I gave out "Praise God," &c. and when it was sung, began again; so that the poor trumpeters sounded till they were black in the face, and at last were fairly worn out. This so enraged the Colonel, that he even foamed with indignation and blasphemies, and I expected every moment his cane would have been laid upon the poor men's heads. However, at last, they all retreated, and got little but shame for their trouble. As the Colonel was in liquor, I took the liberty to send him a few lines the next morning, and was told he said, he would not be guilty of such an indiscretion again for twenty pounds. But as I was preaching in the market-house the next night, the officers came again. They stood awhile pretty attentive, and then broke out into horried blasphemies, and were

for forcing their way through the people to pull me down. But a pretty large number, chiefly old women, violently engaged them, and gained a complete victory: So that I was left in peaceable possession of the field, and finished my discourse quietly. The history of this engagement was published in the Freeman's Journal, and sent all over the kingdom.

In July, 1770, I left Corke, and set out for England, taking Dublin in the way. Here I stayed a few weeks, and opened the new chapel in the Gravel-Walk; and received our child from the country, where she had been at nurse, during our absence at Corke.* We embarked there in a small cutter for Liverpool, taking our little child with us. After we had got out at sea, there fell a dead calm; so that we could not move forward at all. Our provisions fell short. As for my wife, she being sick, could eat nothing; and as for myself, I was not anxious. But I felt for the poor child, only seventeen months old. We had only a little very bad bread, and some stinking water; but the patient little creature would take a morsel of the bread, and drink a little of that water, and so lie down again quite content. The vessel was full of the most abandoned clowns, chiefly new recruits; so that their oaths and vulgar obscenity made it a kind of a floating-hell.

* She lived to be married to a kind husband, and bore seven children, and on the 27 of June, 1801, finished her course, in peace, and entered her rest, where I hope to meet her, never to part again.

We spent the sabbath at Liverpool, where I preached to a large congregation out of doors. From thence we went to Chester, where we spent two or three comfortable days; and so on to Manchester, the place of my destination for the year. I was glad that I was in England again; where I expected to find genuine religion. I found my diligent and indefatigable predecessor, Mr Mather, had done all that a laborious man could do to put the circuit into order, excepting that he had left a family in the preacher's house, which neither suited them nor us. Indeed the house wanted furnishing; but every thing needful was easily granted. I have much reason to acknowledge the kindness of that people; for I was more expensive to them than I have been to any circuit before or since. Yet every thing was done without grudging. Here my dear partner had a long and dangerous fever; but no assistance was wanting, and all expences were cheerfully paid. They did the same when she lay in; so that I had no weight or care on that head. Here I spent two comfortable years, and had the satisfaction to see some fruit of my labour; especially the latter year.

While I was in the Manchester circuit, I published the Discourse upon Thoughts, Words and Actions, intitled, *A Cry to the Professors Conscience, &c.* I have the comfort to find that plain, small tract has been useful; touching the very causes of back-sliding from the living God. It pretends to nothing high or elegant, but purely

that which is experimental and practical, and as such, has answered the end which I proposed. To God our Saviour be the praise.

My two years being expired, I left this agreeable circuit with much regret. I came into the Birstal circuit, expecting I was going into the land of Goshen. But, oh, the amazing difference! There was a general dullness; no discipline, and not one class met well; I scarce ever came into so dreary a region. Their singing indicated the condition they were in: For the few that did sing, sung as if they were half asleep. The congregations were so shrunk at Birstal, that they preached on a Thursday evening in the kitchen, and had plenty of room.

The house was in great want of necessaries; for there was not one decent thing in it. It was highly necessary, if possible, to awaken the people. I began at Birstal, and so proceeded; but I soon found my head in hot water. When I wanted things a little more decent in the dwelling-house, the circuit echoed from side to side with my pride and lordliness; and a world of ill-natured things were said, which made my way very troublesome. One cause of which was, I thought it my duty to keep close to my study, except when preaching, visiting the sick, &c. or other necessary business called me out. This was construed into pride and stateliness. I think, for the first half year, I never had such a time in my life. It was intimated to me, several times, that my fellow-labourers helped

on the discontent in an under-hand way. How this may be, was best known to themselves; but it was a heavy time to me. However, being sensible I was doing my duty, I determined to continue the same conduct; rather than alter my plan, I would chuse to leave the circuit.

Towards the latter end of the year, great numbers began to have a more favourable idea of my conduct; they believed I acted from principle, and God owned my poor labours. However, prejudice continued in many to the last, and when the Conference drew on, I found a private cabal had formed a letter against me, in which my pride and niceness were not forgot, and several surmises added, as if I was a Calvinist, and an enemy to the church. They had their desire, and I had the happiness of being removed to Bradford.

My last year's treatment had left a soreness upon my mind; but it was soon healed by a kind people. I did not find much life amongst them at first; but whatever I said was well received; my fellow-labourers also joined hand in hand, so that the work of God was greatly revived. This year I was visited with a fever, but found God very present and precious, so that this also was for my good. The second year we had a blessed outpouring of the Spirit; believers daily were multiplying, so that during these two years, above six hundred souls were joined, and many, nay most of them continue to this day. This was printed in 1780, since then many of them are gone to glory.

Great numbers were likewise renewed in love, and enabled to rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks.

My next remove was to Kighley. This circuit was a mere scarecrow on various accounts; so that I entered into it with little less than horror. There was a family in the preachers house, which I was obliged to remove. The house was to furnish, and put into repair; and I had to beg the money up and down, which is not pleasing work.

The circuit was a large rambling range. I was to be but three or four days at Kighley in six weeks; and many of the congregations were very small; all which were completely disagreeable circumstances. However, I entered upon my work in the best manner I could. I soon got the house put into good repair, and well furnished; so that my family were comfortably situated. God likewise revived his work in many places, so that between four and five hundred were joined during the year; and the gréater part were able to give a reason of the hope that was in them. A little before the Conference, having to preach one Sunday evening at Padiham, the house was by far too small for the congregation. It being a fine evening, we chose a convenient place to preach on out of doors. While I was preaching to a large congregation, the minister came at the head of a mob, in his gown and cassock, and dragged me down: As soon as I could, I mounted again, and again was jostled down. I attempted

standing up a third time, but to no purpose; so we adjourned to the preaching-house.

Perceiving the bible so much neglected, I preached from Psalm cxix. 11. at Heptonstall, *Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.* The people would take no denial, but insisted on my printing the Sermon, which I have done, intitling it, *The Word of God a hid Treasure.* I have reason to hope it has also been useful. That is my great end, both in speaking and writing.

In July, 1776, I went to the Conference at London, preaching at several places by the way, especially Nottingham, where there is a loving, sensible, judicious people, and at their request I preached in the market-place to a large attentive audience, all as peaceable as if they had been in the most solemn temple. Surely God has something to do in this town. From London I rode to Bristol, preaching in several places by the way, with some degree of satisfaction, especially at Bath and Bristol; so in like manner from Bristol I preached at several places, as Gloucester, Worcester, Birmingham, Derby, and Sheffield, meeting with loving people, and liberty in speaking to them. To God our Saviour be all the glory!

Returning to Kighley, I divided the circuit into two very compact rounds, making Colne and the societies which surrounded it, into a circuit by itself, by which means both the circuits are become

very agreeable; but an unlucky affair happening at Colne, put a great damp to the work there.

We had with much difficulty raised a fine large chapel, and being completed, Mr. Wesley came to open it, and being much crowded both above and below, and the timber of the galleries not being sufficiently strong, just when Mr. Wesley and I had got into the pulpit, before he began, all of a sudden one of the galleries sunk down, and abundance of people had legs, arms, or thighs broken. The confusion, as may easily be imagined, was very great, and the cries of such as were maimed, and such as were frightened, were truly piercing. Great many false reports spread concerning this awful adventure. Some said the whole chapel was in danger, and therefore durst not come into it. However, by one means or other, the work got a dreadful stun, which I fear it will not recover very soon.

After spending my second year at Kighley, among a simple and loving people, in 1777 I set out for the Conference at Bristol, taking Manchester in my way; and there I preached in an open place near the Infirmary, to a large and well-behaved congregation. From thence I preached at Macclesfield, Wolverhampton, Worcester, Gloucester, &c. I hope not in vain; and after the Conference I removed to Wednesbury in Staffordshire, where I had the less hopes of doing good, because my predecessor had done all that I could do in any respect. I found the house bare of furniture, the circuit poor, and trade bad; so that it was hard to put things in or-

der. However, I set about it, and got my design completed in that respect. But still, the great business gave me much uneasiness; the societies were dull, and the congregations miserably small. Calvinism, Antinomianism, and downright Ranterism, had so laid waste this country, that there were small hopes of doing much good. My very soul sunk within me, so that at times it seemed as if I must faint. I cannot tell how they get their time over, who can drag on and see no fruit. Were that my case, I should be ready to conclude, that I was out of my place. To me this was a bitter and a trying season, going round and round, and seeing no good effect. However, when the new year came in, God revived his work; the preaching abroad in the latter end of the summer, had excited many to come and hear. By hearing they were convinced, and many were brought to the knowledge of the love of God. I think near two hundred were this year added to the societies.

Birmingham, which is a principal place in this circuit, had for many years been very turbulent, by reason of the mobbing rabble; but at length an honest justice let them know their place, so that we have peace now. I preached one Lord's day evening in a large square called, the Newmarket. I had much enlargement, and the multitude was still as night. I spoke from Luke xvi. 8. *The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.* I have reason to hope this discourse has not been printed in vain, for it has been

much read in various places. I have reason to think that I and some of my fellow-labourers preaching out of doors, in Birmingham, was a happy means of increasing the blessed work; for before that time we were cased up in an old shabby building, in an obscure, dirty back street; but soon after our going out of doors, a large new chapel was built: and since that two more.

After the next Conference in 1778, I was appointed for Birstal Circuit, into which I came with fear and trembling, remembering the days of old. As my worthy predecessor, Mr. Pawson, had been much blessed among the people, and was much esteemed by them, it made my entrance the more difficult. He had much improved the dwelling-house, and had regulated several things, so that all who come after him will reap the fruit of his labour. I endeavoured to complete what he had left undone. There had been a blessed work in Birstal, where many were suddenly brought in; but the fire had not spread much farther. And as these were young converts, and not established, I feared we should have a sad falling away. But this was not the case; some few dropt off, and but a few. On the other hand, the awakening spread into most of the societies; so that I scarce ever saw so extensive a work. We joined above seven hundred this year, and the greater part alive to God. I never knew so simple means made use of, in the hand of a gracious God, to bring sinners to himself. Prayer-meetings were singularly useful, and so was the

preaching; but thunder and lightning dreams and visions, singing and praying, were all made use of for the awakening of sinners. I returned again, into that circuit, and what providence has yet to do in me or by me, I cannot tell. But here I am, a monument of amazing mercy, willing to lie in his blessed hands as clay in the hands of the Great Potter, so that I may in all things be a vessel meet for my dear Lord's service; wishing only to finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received from him.

This year being attended with much unction of the spirit in the circuit, by bringing many poor wanderers to the fold of the true shepherd, I had some pretty sharp trials to grapple with, in some private affairs; among other things, I had a fine boy seized with fits in a violent manner; for one whole day he had them almost without intermission; for no sooner did he recover from one, but another seized him. I was several times fetched home as supposing he was dying. One time being fetched home near twenty miles off, on the same mournful occasion, and riding pretty sharply upon a high causeway, and a hollow road on my left hand, my horse took fright at something, rearing upon his hind feet, turned round, and tumbled down into the hollow way, and fell upon me; the man who was with me, attempting to dismount his horse too hastily, his foot hung fast in the stirrup, and could not come to my assistance, only his horse was quiet and stood still, or his case might have been very

bad. In the mean time my horse lay upon me as if he were dead; and it was well he did so; for had he attempted to rise or struggle with his fore feet, he would have struck me even in the face, and might have killed me on the spot. I thought one of my legs was broke in pieces, as it lay under the horse upon a stone. However, with hard struggling I got myself from under, and after the numbness was gone, I found I could stand, though pretty much crushed. However, one circumstance upon another, began to impress my mind with some very uneasy sensations, which gave me pain; but riding in a lonely place, I saw a strip of clean paper lying on the ground, curiosity led me to alight and see what it was. The words written were verbatim thus: *The love of Christ is a correcting love; whom he loveth he chasteneth, and correcteth every son whom he receiveth.* This was really a word in season, a sweet reviving cordial, and I know not that my mind has ever been so harrased since. By what hand the bit of paper was dropped, I cannot tell, but the hand of a kind providence directed it to me.

Before I close this part of the narration, there are two things which in gratitude to my God, I cannot omit.

I mentioned before, how desirious I was of improving myself in the original languages. After I had made some progress in Greek, having gone through the Greek Testament and two or three of the classic authors in that language, I wanted to get acquaintance with Hebrew. I procured several

books; but they did not answer my purpose: Likewise while I was in Edinburgh, I employed a Jew, a professed teacher of Hebrew, at an extravagant rate, but I soon found he was utterly insufficient for what he undertook, as he knew nothing of the grammar; so that his teaching was a mere imposition. I began to despair of attaining it, when Robinson's Key came in my way, by which I readily went through the psalms. I procured his Manipulus Linguæ Sanctæ, and by the assistance of that, with Buxtorf's Lexicon, I can read my Hebrew Bible with pleasure. By having a particular method of spending my time, I have found it of the utmost importance. Hereby I save much time, and it is likewise a means of stirring me up. It is true, I have little time for chit chat, which has occasioned me many inconveniences. Some have thought me very proud and reserved, because I would not (as they call it) be free: That is, I would not sit and chatter with them for hours; tell them a great number of little adventures which I had met with. I dare not do it; I deem it quite impertinent, and in no wise calculated to edify.

My method of spending my time is this. The time before breakfast is wholly devoted to my Hebrew Bible, comparing the original text with the Latin and English translations; I did, for sometime carry about with me the Septuagint translation, that is, the Hebrew Bible translated into Greek by seventy Jews, but finding it to be so wide of the Hebrew, I have laid it aside, only consulting it occasionally.

After breakfast, I write, or read in some Latin author, till it is time to take horse. If I do not ride, I visit the sick, and others, till dinner. After dinner I generally read divinity, history, geography, or philosophy, till five; and then spend some time in my Greek Testament, and considering the subject I shall preach from that evening. After preaching and society-meeting, I spend the little remains of the evening in friendly conversation with such as happen to be present, till I retire. I then note down what has occurred in the day, and commit myself into the hands of a gracious God. This is my general manner of spending my time; but I find a good deal of difficulty in keeping to it.—Sometimes I want convenient retirement; so that I am obliged to pursue my study in the midst of children, noise and confusion *.

There is a gross error which some of our people labour under; viz. that we are not to premiditate on what we are to preach; that God is to assist us in an extraordinary manner, and that all study and meditation is taking the matter out of his hands.—Such a notion serves to patronize a sluggish, lounging temper: and is evidently productive of confusion, rhapsody, and nonsense. Indeed, if any one comes to me for advice, or in distress of mind, I directly lay aside every thing else, and apply my-

* The sole reason for inserting this, is wishing to stir up some of my brethren to redeem their time; and what may seem a reflection in the preceding narrative, is but applicable to very few. My brethren in the gospel I esteem above all men.

self wholly to their case; but otherwise I keep to my regular plan. I wonder every preacher does not keep something of a daily journal; more especially of what passes in his own mind. This I have found so useful, that I repent I did not adopt it sooner.

The other circumstance which I cannot omit, is, my commencing, what is called, an Arminian. I observed above, that my first religious acquaintance were Calvinists, some of whom had been joined among the Methodists; from these I received such accounts as gave me a prejudice against them. I likewise read little else but Calvinian authors, and was much delighted with what is called Moderate Calvinism. Indeed there is one branch of Calvinism, viz. Reprobation, what Mr. Fletcher, calls its left-leg, which I never could cordially embrace. But still I hung in suspense, till I read over Mr. Wesley's Predestination calmly considered. Then I bid a final adieu to the damning of infants, and the consigning of unborn souls to hell: His Appeals likewise (which I heartily wish every person, not entirely drunk with prejudice, to read over and over) were of great service to me. I was now a kind of Baxterian, or rather Miltonian, for I saw first the scheme in Paradise Lost. And I still confess much may be said for that scheme of thinking, as it solves many difficulties, and tends to moderation; but still I held fast by Calvinian Imputed Righteousness, and Calvinian Final Perseverance: I call them Calvinian, to distinguish them from Scriptural Im-

puted Righteousness, and Scriptural Perseverance. In this mongrel state I was, when Mr. Wesley published his Abridgment of J. Goodwin on Imputed Righteousness. I had never so much as heard of his name; and no wonder, for he was a condemned heretic among the Calvinists. This book I read, but I did not like it, as he was so unmerciful to my favourite scheme, so warmly set forth in my favourite author, Mr. Hervey. However, after some time I determined to give him a fair reading, and that I might be thoroughly satisfied, I read him over twice. I saw the truth as clear as the shining sun. I saw Calvinian Imputed Righteousness is downright Antinomianism. I still hung in suspence about final perseverance, and knew not which side of the question to take. The authors which I had been accustomed to read were all warm advocates for it, and brought such texts, with their comments upon them, as seemed unanswerable. But Goodwin's Redemption Redeemed fell into my hands; towards the latter end of which he considers the scriptures alledged, and the arguments brought, for Final Perseverance, and answers them in so masterly a manner, as has not left the shadow of a doubt upon my mind. So that I am firmly persuaded a man may make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

But though my own principles are fixt, yet I wish heartily, we could agree to grant each other liberty of conscience, as the King grants it to us all.—There is no forcing of the understanding; the attempting of it has frequently lighted up the dread-

ful flames of persecution. I must confess, the ungenteel, unchristian, scurrilous treatment, with which Mr. Wesley has been treated by several of the opposite party, has given me a very unfavourable idea, both of them and the cause in which they are embarked. It seems to be the genuine spirit of the Synod of Dort, or rather, I may say, of Queen Mary, and Bishop Bonner. It is most certain, that giving of hard names, with a deal of low buffoonery, will never advance the cause of a meek and lowly Jesus.

My next remove was to York circuit, in which I met with many kind friends. They had just finished a neat, genteel house for the preacher's residence, and made every thing very convenient. A small spot of ground before the front I turned into a neat little garden. I found the people very loving, and the congregations increased, and I and my fellow-labourers were received with very great affection. I preached abroad in several parts of the city, especially in the Thursday-Market, being very willing to stir up the inhabitants to seek for their salvation.

Preaching, one Lord's day, in the Thursday-Market, the Lord-Mayor sent his officers to forbid me, and to insist upon my coming down; I let the speaker deliver his message, and then resumed my discourse, taking no notice of what was said to me, as indeed it meant nothing saying any thing to the officers, seeing they only did as they were commanded. I happened to be speaking from a text

that was somewhat singular, Acts xvii. 6. *These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also.* Our brethren thought it highly advisable to publish the sermon, as we expected to have heard further from the magistrates; accordingly I wrote it down while every thing was fresh upon my mind, and I have reason to hope it was useful in York, as numbers read it, who perhaps never heard one of us preach in their lives; nor did I hear any more from the Lord-Mayor.

The most disagreeable thing in this circuit is, the smallness of the congregations; hence one is almost buried alive. There is but little trade in any part of the circuit, and where there is little trade, there is seldom much increase in religion. They are chiefly farmers, and in general, in a state of great bondage to their wealthy landlords, to whom they are a kind of vassals; and in general, dread them more abundantly than they do their maker; and though some of them have got money upon their farms, with a deal of care and hard labour, yet there are others very hard set to live; and certainly they are some of the greatest slaves in England: for they labour hard, and live extreme poorly; in short, they seem to have little comfort here, nor any bright prospect of faring much better hereafter. However, there are a few who labour to keep their garments undefiled, and who are very loving to such as are sent to preach the gospel among them. I felt much union of spirit, and I hope to meet them in the region of eternal bliss.

My two years being expired in this quiet circuit, I set out for the Conference at London, and took the road through Lincolnshire, and was truly pained to see how religion lies in ruins all the way to London. I preached in several places, but the congregations were pitifully small, and very languid and dull. From Huntingdon, I crossed the country to Bedford, and preached there, and the next day at Luton, where I found my worthy friend, Mr. Cole, had built a small chapel, and it was pretty well filled. During the Conference week, I preached in most of our chapels in London, and found much liberty, especially at West-street, Seven-dials, and was glad to find the people in London, love plain, simple preaching. I think the preachers, by labouring more for accuracy, than life, miss the mark in London; and perhaps that may account for the deadness which hath been complained of in that city for many years. I find the people in London, want; and love something which will affect their hearts and stir up their souls.

In my return I took Luton, Bedford and Leicester in my way, and had a comfortable time at Nottingham. The people seemed to drink in the word as the parched ground drinks in the vernal showers. O, 'tis a pleasing task to preach to a judicious lively people! Such the dear people at Nottingham seem to be. I do not wonder that their chapel is too small, and that they are engaged in building one larger, and in a more convenient

part of the town, and which, I hope, will prove a blessing to many that are yet unborn.

My destination this year was Sheffield, a place which will be dear to me while I can remember any thing. In general I found things at a low ebb, and did not wonder much at that. However, I and my fellow-labourers set about our work with great unanimity of spirit; and our different gifts seemed happily blended, and suited to the people. The large chapel was well filled, and though several detached parties set up, yet it seemed to affect us very little. 'Tis true, there were several unpromising places in the circuit; and some towns, especially Doncaster, a pretty genteel town, but very destitute of religion. Since that time there is a blessed change in Doncaster, for the better; in so much, that it is become the head of a circuit. Indeed the chapel is in a very disagreeable part of the town, and the little society chiefly very poor. Likewise in winter evenings they are pestered with the rabble, and in summer time few will come near. I tried to preach out of doors, but I fear it was to little purpose. However, Sheffield made an ample amends, and as we were a whole week in the town at a time, we had time upon our hands. We were three preachers, and managed with two horses; a scheme which is highly advantageous wherever it takes place; add to this, there is a cordial love to their ministers: they really *know them that labour among them*. They are loving and friendly, and whatever is wanted they are ever ready to supply,

and take a delight in making their preachers happy. They do not look upon the cause, in which they are embarked, as something by the bye, concerning which they are at liberty to let sink or swim; but they look upon it as the cause of God, the business for which Christ Jesus laid down his life; and as such they consider it as their duty, yea their privilege and honour, to support and propagate it with all their might.

There is also a number of serious sensible leaders, who interest themselves in carrying on the work of God; and though there are near thirty of them, yet for the two years which I had the happiness of being among them, we always met and parted in much peace.

Our quarter-meetings were conducted with great harmony and concord; every one took such care that we never run short, so that there were no complaints, nor was there cause. As they felt and cared for their ministers, so they considered every thing in the way of house-keeping was become dear, and with great cheerfulness augmented the assistance to support the preachers and their families. For my own part, I have much reason to acknowledge the many favours, both public and private, which I and my family received from that affectionate and liberal hearted people. May the Lord abundantly reward them! Indeed I believe he does; many he blesses in their basket, and in their store in an ample manner.

In Rotherham, in like manner, there are a few

particularly dear to me, whose friendship and happy fellowship, gratitude will ever oblige me to acknowledge in the most affectionate manner.

I have reason to bless God that I ever came into this circuit; his presence I have often experienced, and glory be to his dear and adorable name, I did not labour in vain; good was done, sinners were convinced and converted, beleivers were strengthened and edified, and backsliders healed. Finding the glorious Godhead of Christ struck at, by a number of men united, who called themselves, *The Unitarian Club*, I preached and printed a sermon to prove that he who died for us, is, in the most unlimited sense, *Over all, God blessed for ever.*

Application would have readily been made for my continuance another year, but as I knew it would be in vain, I desired them not to do it. And here, friendly reader, with the conclusion of my labours among this friendly and much esteemed people, I will conclude this part of my narrative; may they, may you and I happily meet in the kingdom of our dear Immanuel. *Amen.*

## *THE SECOND PART.*

MANY years are now elapsed since I published a narrative of the most remarkable occurrences which had befallen me for the space of forty years; nor had I any intention of troubling the world any farther with my worthless history, which may appear to have very little of an interesting nature in it, except to myself. But the part already published having been out of print for some years, and several wishing for another impression, I have determined to reprint it; and several changes having taken place in the body of people, with which I am connected, and some in which I am a little implicated, I think it may be of use to add, what I call, a second part to the former, in which I may throw a little light upon some recent occurrences. Perhaps, some may think, that my attaching other things to my own narrative, may be a diviation from the rules of strict Biography. But I have observed, in the reading of the lives of others, and in particular, that of Mr. Baxter, that a variety of other circumstances are interwoven therein. I may venture to follow so good an example. The death of Mr. Wesley, the hurries which we have had respecting the Lord's Supper, the service, in what are

called Church hours, and the attempts which have been made to rent and divide us, have happened in the space of a few years, and have agitated the body in no small degree.

I removed from Sheffield to Halifax, in the year 1784, and having had much comfort in that circuit in years past, I removed with some degree of satisfaction; and expectation that I should meet with similar satisfaction; but alas! there had been a falling away, some even grown cold and indifferent, and some, I doubt, were quite fallen asleep. I found cause of mourning, that many had departed from the faith, and the greater part had left their first love. Indeed it is no new thing, whoever will read the Epistles to the Corinthians, Galatians, and the Hebrews, will find the same complaints; and again, look into the Seven Epistles to the Seven Assiatic Churches, and we see but two, that of Smyrna, and that of Philadelphia, which were free from blame, even in the apostolic age; and what a dreadful falling away, soon after ensued all that have any acquaintance with church history, cannot be ignorant of; all of which shews the propriety of that solemn admonition, *What I say to one, I say to all—Watch.*

We were three preachers in the circuit, but one* out of three was laid up almost the whole year; I think he did not go through the circuit once; a gracious man, and an exceeding useful preacher, so that the loss, or want of his labour was a great

* Mr. Valton.

check to our success. However, some souls were gathered in, and the work a little revived.

My next remove was to Leeds; which proved a trial to my little stock of patience, especially the first year. I always find where the reins of discipline are slackened, it sinks the state of vital religion very much. I found it so here, and the mischief is, there is in people an unwillingness to be brought into order, when they have been accustomed to live without it; and the minister who attempts the reform, must bear his cross. There were several local preachers who ought not to have been private members, whose conduct was even immoral. I am at a loss to know what can induce men to preach, who are destitute of the life and power of godliness. However, there were several very excellent characters among the local preachers; several of whom are gone to their everlasting reward. But very great care should be taken that men of unblemished characters alone, be admitted into the work of the ministry. The same care should be taken respecting the class-leaders, and then there is some hope to believe that they will labour to make the people like themselves. Indeed, it is natural for the people to take the tinge of their guides. There were many excellent persons in the society at Leeds; but some professed a very great attachment to the church; I am not partial that way, as is pretty well known; however I love those that love our Lord Jesus in sincerity. I say very little about the church; for however inconsistent it may appear,

yet I believe there are excellent people in the establishment, both ministers and hearers. I was well aware that many of our people seldom went to church, and received the Lord's Supper no where. Truly they had lost sight of it; there might have been no such command in the New Testament, as, *Do this in remembrance of me.* Indeed this is the case with many in Yorkshire, to this day. Knowing this to be so, I exhorted the people to attend the Lord's Supper, and happened to say, the time would come when the Methodists would enjoy that ordinance among themselves, and in the mean time I wished them to receive it in the best manner they could. The very intimation of any such thing, as the Methodists becoming Dissenters, was as bad as high treason, and I soon found myself in hot water indeed. It is inconceivable what mischief bigotry does! I could do nothing right in the eyes of those people, and prejudices arose from hearsay tales, which for a time retarded my usefulness, and made my way rough and troublesome. Oh! people should be exceedingly careful both of their tempers and words, or they may throw such stumbling blocks in the way as will not be easily removed, even though they would give the world if they had it, to remove them. However, in the midst of trouble some good was done, and the second year was more peaceable, and consequently more comfortable; but this was not the first stripe I have met with from the whip of bigotry. It is a poi-

sonous weed, and as such has been a pest to the church of Christ in all ages.

In the month of November, I was seized with a rheumatic fever, the severest affliction of body, I ever remember labouring under. The pain was such, that I could compare it to nothing, but as if my limbs were tearing, or twisting off. It brought me very low, and the only time that I can remember having any one to sit up in the night with me, and which laborious task, my dear partner chiefly undertook. In the beginning I felt much comfort and confidence in God; but towards the latter end my head was considerably affected; and the slumbers I had were disturbed with wild and incoherent rovings, and very weak indeed I was. However, the Lord raised me up again; but the relics of that disorder, I suppose, I shall feel, till the dust shall return to the dust again. It renders walking particularly fatiguing; for after I have walked a few hundred yards, the pains in my knees, ankles, &c. are so acute, that I am soon in a bath of sweat, and am obliged to sit down upon any thing which I can find in my way. I have considerable difficulty in geting on horse back, so that I am not well calculated for a traveller, either on horse back, or on foot. I was obliged this year to submit to spectacles; I had perceived my sight gradually to fail for some time. This I attributed to the close attention which I had paid some time before, to the compiling the Concordance, which I published, and being rather straitened for time, I did much of

the work by candle light, without using a skreen, a circumstance which I advise every one to attend unto, who either reads or writes much by candle light. I once thought, my sight would last to the end of my days; but by making too free with it, I am mistaken.

My next remove was to Manchester. I had laboured many years ago in this circuit with much satisfaction, and left it with regret. As there will be a thorn in every rose, so I found it here. A few who affected to be righteous over much, that is, who set up themselves as judges of other people, gave us some trouble; they were very censorious of other people's apparel, furniture, &c. which did not agree with their standard, and in their prayers and conversation made them matters of talk, and in one love-feast, instead of speaking experimentally to edification, began a launching out in a very anti-christian railing manner, which threw the whole meeting into confusion; so that I was under the disagreeable necessity of putting two of those troublesome men out of the society. However, we had a considerable ingathering of precious souls, especially in Saddleworth, so that it was a pleasure to me to go into these rough vallies. But in every stage of life, we have need to watch, so I found it in this circuit; and not being always on my guard, I sometimes gave way to triffling circumstances, which brought my mind low. Satan can make a corrupt heart subservient to his devices, without due care; no matter how trivial a thing may be, if

it stand between God and the soul, it does much mischief. May I ever learn obedience from slips and blunders, for I have many of these to bemoan. It is well that there is a never failing intercessor, an advocate with the Father, and who can pity poor mortal worms, and whose grace is sufficient to heal backsliding souls, and to help in time of need. I may say, Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for in thy sight I can neither justify myself, nor another.

My next remove was to Hull: hoping that bathing in salt water might be of some use to my poor disordered Son. Whether it was owing to the low damp country, and scarcity of fire, or some other cause, but my rheumatic complaints were troublesome, so that I could but walk very poorly. Indeed, in some places, the roads were so bad, that it was impossible to go any quicker than a slow foot space, and then I was much pinched with the cold. In Hull, the congregations were large, and pretty well in Beverley; but in other places they were small and dull enough.

In the beginning of my second year, soon after the Conference, I had two providential escapes, which I should be very ungrateful to a gracious preserver, were I to forget them. In my return from Bristol Conference, I took Sheffield in my way, and so through Rotherham, and Doncaster, to Thorne; and there hoping to save time and expence, I took a small boat, expecting to get down to Hull in one tide. But the boatman trifled away

so much time in the morning, that the tide was spent when we got to Bruff, twelve miles short of Hull. My youngest daughter was with me, and in this place when the tide is out, it leaves a very large space covered with mud and slime, which makes it very difficult to get on shore, and more especially for women; and as we had to wait here more than six hours, I was sure it would be improper for my daughter to be imprisoned on the water all that time. I having my boots on, with the help of a staff, got on shore; but it being so slippery, I durst not take my daughter on my back, lest I should fall, and throw her in the mud; the boatman being old, and rather feeble, I durst not trust her with him, for the same reason; however, I saw a stout man, who had been catching eels, without shoes or stockings, and one that was accustomed to walk on those miry, slippery places, and got him for six-pence to fetch my daughter, and he brought her safe on shore; thus far we were safe, and I was thankful. But still we were a little at a loss how to dispose of ourselves, for six or seven hours, till the tide should turn; there was but one poor little ale-house in the place, and that crowded with men drinking, and far from being agreeable. However, we passed the time as well as we could, till eight in the evening, when we weighed anchor and embarked, again; heavy rain came on, and it was very dark; but we had no shelter, being in a little open boat. The wind meeting the tide, made our little bark toss to some purpose. A

young woman in the boat screamed out amain; my dear girl said not a word, though she apprehended we should over set; but commended herself into the hands of a gracious God. Perhaps there was not much danger, but we thought there was, and at any rate, our situation was very unpleasant; the waves tossed, the night was dark, and the rain was heavy. But about midnight we arrived in the port of Hull, and here we were disagreeably circumstanced; for we had to climb over the ships in the dark, and I was very near falling into the hold of a large empty ship. Here I felt a touch of impatience, at the man, for bringing us into such a disagreeable situation. However, after some delays, we got safe to our habitation; and although I was under the painful necessity of waking my family; my dear wife received us with open arms, little thinking, that while we were tossing up and down the Humber, she was comfortably sleeping in her bed. Thus will the storms of life end, and may we reach the haven of eternal repose.

'Tis there I'll bathe my weary soul,
In seas of endless rest;
And not a wave of trouble roll,
Across my peaceful breast.

The next kind interposition of providence, was as follows: A part of the circuit lies in that quarter called Holderness; a large tract of low marshy country, and in order to drain it, there are large canals cut, in different directions; they are so large

that boats go on them, by which they carry their manure from place to place; and over these canals are bridges built of brick, in convenient places, for horses and carriages to pass over. Coming to one of these bridges, which was newly built, a man standing by the side of the canal, said Sir, I am doubtful, if that bridge is not giving way; I think it is hardly safe for you to attempt passing over. As I saw no danger, I feared none; and thinking I should have a long way to go round to another bridge, and perceiving carriages had gone over, I went on, but before I got over, the whole fabric came down, as if it had been cut off at each end, it sunk under the horse, and he dropped down perpendicular, and I very gravely sat on his back. It had been dry weather for a long time, so that the water in the canal was very low, which was very providential, or very likely both the horse and myself would have been lost. Likewise, another circumstance, was very favourable, that is, a considerable number of men were at work in the field, and hearing the crash of the bridge, they ran, and gave all assistance to help the horse out, or the water might have risen by the current being stopped, so that the poor animal might have been drowned before I could have got assistance, as the place was at a considerale distance from any houses. Another circumstance which I considered as providential, and that was, had the horse taken a step or two more before the fall of the bridge, his fore-feet would have been on firm ground, and the bridge

giving way behind he would very likely have tumbled backward, and fallen upon me; and if so, it is very easy to judge what would have been my situation. But a gracious God gives his angels charge over his followers; for they are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. In the foregoing circumstances, I am persuaded of their kind interposition. It is true, God does not need their interference; nor does he need men to preach, seeing he can convert souls without them: nor does he need men to till the ground, seeing he can cause the earth to yield her fruit without the tillers toil; but he is pleased to use his creatures as instruments, that thereby they may be stimulated to diligence and excited to love one another, seeing that all are made subservient to the good of the whole: insomuch that the different members of society are all useful, even as the different members of the body are to the whole. In the most opulent city, the humble chimney-sweeper is as useful in his place as the chief magistrate.

In March the second, (1791,) that great man of God, the Rev. John Wesley, paid the debt of nature. He ended his long, laborious, and useful life, comfortably. That I had a crowded audience far more than the large chapel in Hull could contain, was not to be wondered at, as I expect that was the case in every place where a funeral Sermon was preached on the occasion, which I suppose was all over the three kingdoms. It was

thought great changes would take place after his death, and various things were prophesied by people of warm imaginations. We had some little stir; I believe chiefly through a printed circular letter issued out from Hull; which I suppose originated from some persons who professed to be warm advocates for the church, and had persuaded others to sign it, which was sent to every circuit in the kingdom, and called an echo back to it from many circuits, which seemed to raise a smoke in the land, so that it was thought there would be a division at the Conference; and perhaps steps by some were prepared for such an event. A scheme had been taken previous, that was to divide the kingdom into districts, and accordingly the preachers in the several districts met, and did what they could to prepare matters for the Conference, which met at Manchester. A chairman was chosen who was stiled *President*, a phrase which I objected to as being a state term, and would have had the more humble, and more suitable term of *Moderator* to have been adopted. But the majority were for the former, and so it has passed ever since. We had a large assembly, as might be expected, and many things said pro and con, and in much better humour than might have been hoped, and in the issue it was determined by the majority to take up the plan just as Mr. Wesley had left it.—This I saw would be a bone of contention the ensuing year, as it left our affairs in a very ambiguous unsettled state. The warm churchmen

rode off in triumph, and spread the tidings every where, that the old plan was confirmed; and now it was supposed, that our service in church hours and sacraments were at an end. For it is to be observed, vast numbers, besides preachers attended at this Conference, that is, came to Manchester, all anxious to hear what the result would be. I was certain, that such a vague decision would leave us worse, than it found us, and so it proved: for it left every one at liberty to interpret it, as their judgment led them. Now the spirit and meaning of taking up the plan, as Mr. Wesley left it, was to follow the openings of providence, and where good reasons could be assigned for the service being in church hours, and for their having the Lord's Supper, that there the people ought to have it, leaving every one at liberty to chuse for themselves; nothing could be more fair and equitable. But the warm churchmen would hear of nothing less than an uniformity, and such as were not willing to conform might go to the dissenters; only this much, they would grant, namely, that they might live in disobedience to Christ's command; no one was blamed for neglecting the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and they might stay at home the best part of the Lord's day, or they might run to any other place, even to the popish mass house; the only crimes unpardonable, were, our having service in church hours, and the sacred ordinance of communion. It required no great sagacity, or foresight, to perceive, that this could never hold long, or that it was cal-

culated to tear and scatter the people of God, and destroy the life of religion out of their souls. Indeed, it made us a troublesome year, and printed letters were issued out on all sides, and all companies were taken up with debates upon old and new plans, to the destruction of brotherly love.

My appointment was for Liverpool, where there were two warm parties against each other. Not knowing what sort of provisions there was for a family, or what kind of reception I should meet with, I judged it prudent to go alone, and leave my family at Manchester, where my eldest was married, and had been settled some time; and it was well I did so, as matters turned out. My sentiments of the matters in dispute, had been long known, I never concealed them; and of course was a known heretic; and on that account, my appointment to Liverpool, was as welcome to the church party, as water in a new ship; as they were determined that no innovations, as they called them, should take place if they could hinder them.

My judgment then was, and still is, that every one should act according to the light, which God has given them, in those circumstantial matters, and leave every other person the same liberty, which would prevent much contention and strife; and it certainly is the birth right of all intelligent beings, whether men or angels. For where God has given no positive law, men should be very careful how they attempt to bind the conscience, where God has left it free. That usurping principle has

occasioned all that dreadful rage of persecution, whether of Pagan, Jew, Christian, or Mahometan; whether Papist, Churchman, or Dissenter, and is one awful trait of the great Anti-christ, or the Scarlet Harlot, that sitteth on many waters; against which all the lovers of the Prince of Peace should be upon their guard. The mind, or heart can never bow to any thing which the judgment disapproves of.

When I came to Liverpool, things had but a discouraging aspect. Though it was known on what day I should arrive, yet I found the dwelling-house shut up, and had been so for some time; every thing looked very cold and naked, all just as it had been left; no steward nor any one came near me. The matter in fact was, the steward was a warm churchman, and the *primum mobile* of that party, and one that had acted without controul, just as he pleased; and being the man in office, others took it for granted, that he would take care to fill up his office without their interfering with him; or I should not have been thus treated. It was Saturday, when I arrived, I preached that evening; no one came to make any inquiry, or give me any directions respecting any one individual thing. On the Lord's day, a friend invited me to dine, and I preached morning and evening, with some degree of liberty; but still I had to grope out my way as well as I could. I found many things would be wanting when my family arrived, particularly bed clothes; for I could find little more than what was

sufficient for one bed, and I should want for four. I found a large deal box, but it was locked, and no key was to be found. On the Monday morning the steward called upon me, and appeared in a friendly mood, and told me, that if I would let things go on in the old plan, every thing I wished for, I should have, but if I made any alteration, I must shift for myself, or to that effect.

After some days I received an address from ten leaders, vehemently requesting, that there might be no service in church hours, nor sacrament. It is here to be observed, this address was not only for themselves, and the people in their way of thinking, but it was to bind the consciences of all the rest of the society, trustees, leaders, and people likewise. About the same time, I received another address from thirteen leaders, (and as I remember, three names besides, who stood neuter,) who begged in the name of their people, that I would let *them* have service in church hours: they did not want to compel the rest of their brethren, but only pleaded for *themselves*, that they might have liberty of conscience, and an opportunity of bringing their families to the public worship at a convenient time. What made the matter more in their favour was, a new chapel was built rather on one side of the town, and some said, they subscribed on purpose, to the building, that it might be opened at a regular time of day. On the present plan, it was of very little use, except of a Sunday evening; for of a Sunday morning very

occasioned all that dreadful rage of persecution, whether of Pagan, Jew, Christian, or Mahometan; whether Papist, Churchman, or Dissenter, and is one awful trait of the great Anti-christ, or the Scarlet Harlot, that sitteth on many waters; against which all the lovers of the Prince of Peace should be upon their guard. The mind, or heart can never bow to any thing which the judgment disapproves of.

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few indeed attended. We were two preachers in town, and had nothing to do, from the preaching at seven in the morning, till six in the evening; and our people running hither and thither, hearing what was far from profiting them, or else staying at home, and two chapels shut up the best part of the day. Had not a large body of people requested it, however reasonable the thing itself might be, I should have let things go on in the same dull channel, for the sake of such as desired it. In a few days after, came six of the leading men of the church party, and wished to converse with me on the subject. We had a long conversation, I used every argument that appeared to be scriptural and reasonable; but it made no impression; all they could say, was, that it was the *old plan*, and God had blessed it, and Mr. Wesley had said, If the Methodists leave the church, God would leave them. That Mr. Wesley might say, some such word, I make no doubt, in some hasty moment, but even in that, he did not always tell them what he meant by church. His definition of the Church of England, is, that the believers in England, are the church, and I hope we are so far from leaving these, that we wish to increase their number. I always did, and ever shall, revere and esteem the memory of Mr. Wesley; but if Mr. Wesley, and all the good men in the world, should say any thing, useless, the word of God says it, we are at liberty to withhold our judgment. But I had another difficulty in my way. We had a new dwelling-house co-

vered in, but it wanted finishing, and we were paying rent for another house in the mean time. The present steward would take no active part in it, unless I would promise no alteration should be made; and no one could interfere in the business, but the man in office, so that we were at a stand. I knew things ought not to continue thus; therefore in a full vestry meeting, I was determined to have the matter settled, and urged the steward to set the business forward, that we might not be paying rent for a house, and let our own run to ruin. After much reasoning, and even entreating, he utterly refused to act, and used some expressions not of the kindest nature; so I was obliged to appoint other stewards, to see our business carried on.

I was now urged to open the new chapel in the forenoon, and having waited several months, and used every argument, in which I believed both scripture and reason would support me, to reconcile the contending party, but to no purpose; and perceiving that two thirds of the society were grieved and hurt. I, on the sixteenth day of November, 1791, committed the unpardonable offence, in beginning the service at half past ten in the forenoon. The ten leaders immediately withdrew, and took as many of their people with them, as they could prevail. I suppose, they thought we could not carry on the work without their help; however, they were mistaken; for several came forward who had it in their power, and nothing was

wanting. But if men were displeased, God approved of what was done, for several were set at liberty in that chapel, in the forenoon service, and the society has rapidly increased from that time; meanwhile several of those violent opposers have turned out very poor characters indeed. However, it was a time of much trouble to my mind, and many lies were issued abroad; I received some threatning letters, which gave me much pain. But if ever I did any thing with a single eye in my life, it was my conduct at this time; for I am sure, I had neither ease, honour nor profit in view. As the body was convulsed, and as those throughout the nation who wanted the service at a convenient hour, and to have the Lord's Supper according to our Saviour's institution, were quite willing that their brethren should enjoy their liberty in going to church, &c. every other circumstance belonging to Methodism both in doctrine and discipline, was to stand as it had done, nothing altered, changed, or dropped; it seemed quite unreasonable, that any part of the connexion should be desirous to put a yoke upon the necks of their brethren, which they themselves were unwilling to bear. I published a pamphlet as a vindication of our conduct, and shewed some weighty reasons for our proceedings. I hope it was useful.

We passed through the winter rather uncomfortably, in some respects, partly from false reports, which were raised, and partly from what appeared a sort of tantalizing behaviour, in our friends who had left us. Sometimes it was re-

ported, that they were coming back again, and would drop all opposition; then all vanished like the morning cloud. Sometimes it was said, that we were going to drop the intinerant plan, and of course, that I had chosen Liverpool for my station; nay, that we should turn Calvinists as well as Dissenters; and a multitude of romantic and improbable things.

As our brethren had lived so long without the communion, they wished for that ordinance, knowing it to be the command of Christ; they solicited me to administer it to them I believed that I had a perfect right to do so; for if I was called to do the highest office, viz. be the mouth of God in preaching the gospel, surely, I was not prohibited doing the lesser offices; such as baptizing, and distributing the bread and wine in the communion. Moreover, when I was appointed by the Conference, for Liverpool, I understood there were two parties, I therefore desired the Conference to give me my orders, so that I might know what it was expected that I should do. The answer was, that I might just act as I thought proper, when I came thither, as I should be then capable of judging when I saw how the circumstances stood. From hence I judged that I had full power to act, according to the best of my judgment, and that was my rule.

But there was one difficulty in my way, respecting the Lord's Supper; though I had been a preacher thirty years, or more, yet I had never re-

ceived any formal ordination by the imposition of hands, and although I believed it lawful, yet I did not think it expedient to celebrate the Lord's Supper, without some formality of that kind. I own I had some hesitation in my mind concerning the propriety of submitting to a human form, after being owned so many years by the chief shepherd without it. I am certain there is no command in scripture for such a ceremony, and that it is no ways essential to a gospel ministry, or minister. Likewise the solemn admission into the awful office by a number of old, well tried and aged ministers of the New Testament, appears to me a real scriptural ordination. However, I submitted to a formal ordination; for which, I am neither better nor worse, except the prayers that were put up at that time. But there was another obstacle in the way. Our people have been exhorted to go to sacrament; but numbers are very ignorant of the nature and design of the solemn ordinance. I therefore considered what I could recommend to them, upon the subject. I could not recollect one single tract, that was sufficiently, explicit, clear and concise enough. For among the multitude of sermons published by Mr. Wesley, there is not one upon the Lord's Supper. I therefore, wrote one upon, from 1 Cor. xi. 28. and delivered it in the chapel, and afterwards published it. I own I have the confidence to think, I have seen nothing upon the subject, that states that important ordinance in a clearer light.

The time of our district meeting drew on, where I attended. My conduct at Liverpool was examined and approved; and farther it was agreed that I should administer the Lord's Supper at Liverpool. Accordingly I gave public notice that I should join with them in breaking bread in remembrance of him who died for us. It was a blessed season in the general; and two poor captives were set at liberty, who desired thanks to be given in the evening, to their gracious deliverer. A blessed beginning indeed! But though God was pleased with our obedience to the command of his Son, man was not so; for our brethren in the opposition, found themselves highly offended, although they had withdrawn, and therefore had nothing to do with us. But the matter was, all we did was wrong, seeing we could not comply with their wishes, or I might say, commands.

The affair at Liverpool made so much noise, that some of the preachers in the district would have a meeting upon the spot, I made no objection, though I deemed the meeting very needless. Six preachers came, three from our district, and three from other districts; there were several things that I might have objected to, but I really wanted peace, consistent with a good conscience. After a days talk it was agreed to drop the Lord's Supper till the Conference. This I submitted to, and am not quite sure I did right. But I did it for peace.

The Conference met in London, in 1792, and such a Conference I never was at before, and I hope

I shall never be at such another. It was really a reproach, that a number of Ministers, of the Prince of Peace, should shew so little of the mind of their master. Such unholy anger, noise, and tumult, was a disgrace to any assembly, even upon temporal concerns, much more an assembly of Divines, met together, to consult how to promote the kingdom of peace and righteousness in the earth. And after long and angry debates respecting the Lord's Supper, it was brought to such a conclusion as no one would ever have thought of, viz. putting it to the Lot. Cast lots! to know whether we should obey a plain precept; a precept that was never once disputed for fifteen hundred years! I opposed it, and so did others; but the vote for the lot had the majority. The lot turned against the Lord's Supper; that is, the whole body of Methodists were to lie under an interdict, for one year: Strange indeed! but so it was, and the party triumphed. However, I may say such a thing happened this year as never did before; at the end we were so far from encreasing that our number decreased 300. And another disagreeable circumstance happened, which was not for our honour, and that was, going to Law with the Trustees of the New-Chapel at London, by which, near two thousand pounds were thrown away, and the minds of many exceedingly hurt; many of the Trustees driven away, and a stab given to that bond of Union, viz. *brotherly-love*.

I was of course arraigned at the Bar this Confer-

ence, for my conduct at Liverpool; even the President took an active part in the business, contrary to all rule in the most criminal cases; the judge is generally supposed to be on the prisoners side; only he is to deside according to truth and justice. However, I pleaded—*Not guilty.* I could not see that I had committed any crime. I asked, had I not full power given me from the Conference, to act as I judged for the best? Had I not done so? But I had caused a division in the society. I answered, there would have been a greater division if I had acted otherwise, and a greater cause for it. In short, after divers things had been said pro and con. the matter dropt, only my brethren in the opposition urged my removal from Liverpool the ensuing year. This I would not consent to for two reasons; 1. My removing would imply that I had acted amiss, a thing that I was not conscious of, and, secondly, as I had taken much pains, and suffered much in procuring the people their liberty, I was not willing that any one should be sent which would undo all, and drive two-thirds of the people from us. At length that matter was settled, I was permitted to return again. Mr. Joseph Bradford was appointed to be my colleague. As he had professed himself to be on the side of the church, it was thought he was appointed as a check upon me; so the church party gave it out at Liverpool. However, I knew him to be an upright, worthy character, and therefore made no objection against him; and as that absurd Lot had passed to have no

Sacrament that year, I resolved to keep the order, we passed the year very agreeably, and had not one word of contention either about the Sacrament or any thing else. Nor do I remember ever passing an easier year in all my life. We made an attack upon Ormskirk, and got a place to preach in, and fitted with a pulpit and benches, and a couple of rooms adjoining, one of which we got furnished for the preacher, whenever he came, and a man and his wife occupied the other, and looked after the little chapel, and did what the preacher had occasion for while there. We also formed a small society. A considerable sum of money was begged for the above purposes, but I was heartily sorry that it was given up some time after we left the circuit. We had contended with much opposition by mobs and riots; but even these were quelled. A ringleader was taken up and sent to prison; but for the sake of his family even our people begged him off, so that he was not tried at the sessions, to which he was bound; yet after the way was thus made, and matters in a fair way of being successful, it pained my mind to find that all was knocked on the head; and if ever the place is attacked again, very likely the rabble will renew their opposition.

I observed before, that our numbers through the connexion were less by three hundred, than they were the year before, such a reduction I cannot remember we ever had. It was therefore determined the next Conference that it should be granted that, some places should have the Lord's Supper,

and Liverpool was one. My appointment was Bolton, to which place I came in very great hopes of peace and quietness. But numbers in that town were almost intoxicated with what they pretended to be loyalty; and all who would not drink and swear, and curse the French, were deemed disaffected to government. I fell under that condemnation, for the above reasons; but especially on account of the book which I have written upon Liberty of Conscience. It seems to have fallen into the hands of several obscure attornies, who wanted to be known, and therefore endeavoured to squeeze something of sedition out of my harmless pamphlet: and, if I am rightly informed, one or more were sent up to the government, and a report prevailed that I was taken up; whereas politics are matters that I study very little, nor was there any thing of the kind in the book. However, I was frequently called and abused as I walked the streets, and frequently honoured by the appelation of, *Tom Paine;* whereas those who used to bawl after me, were more of *T. Paine's* principles than I ever was.—We had some little disturbance likewise at Bolton, respecting the Lord's Supper, even some who had wished for it, took it into their heads to oppose it, and could not give any reason why, only they would do it. We had a good work at Bury, especially the first year; that society had been brought very low; but we had a gracious ingathering. Also at a place called Radcliffe, we began a society.

Our Conference was this year at Bristol, and an uncomfortable confused time it was. We had much wrangle, and to little purpose. A division began in the Bristol society. A chapel had been built some years on Kingsdown, for the purpose of having service in church hours, and the Lord's Supper; the Trustees of the chapel in Broadmead were unwilling to allow this, and resolved that no preacher should preach in their chapel (for they were sole proprietors) who would preach in the chapel on Kingsdown, in church hours, and administer the Lord's Supper, and this threw us into much confusion; for they kept their determination, so that one of the three preachers appointed for Bristol was shut out of the pulpit in Broadmead. This occasioned a meeting of the district to be called after the Conference was over, to which I was invited, and strongly pressed by various letters to attend. I therefore drove back from Bolton to Bristol, upon the occasion. We met the opposite party for several days, but to no purpose; we could not unite them, so that nothing could be done but that of building another chapel, as near the old one as possible. A station soon offered, very near the old chapel, where a large, elegant chapel is now built, so that our brethren have their full liberty: may they improve it to the glory of God.

As our matters respecting liberty of consience were not settled, and vast numbers of our brethren were still deprived of their birth-right, a meeting was projected to be held at Litchfield, to see if some

mode could be hit upon for the general good to be offered at the ensuing Conference. Who was the author of the meeting I never knew to this day.—Being not only invited to this harmless convention, but strongly urged to go, I attended; we met at an Inn, supposing we could met without being taken notice of, as Litchfield is a place where no Methodists reside. I feared the scheme would do more harm than good, and so it proved. As for our assembling there in secret, that was very improbable, as we were all preachers of long standing, and very much known all over the kingdom. My whole and sole intention, was to try any scheme that could be hit upon to give our brethren, who desired it, all the ordinances of Christ. But when we were together, another thing was started; it was thought in many instances the districts were not sufficient for the necessary discipline in certain cases, and therefore it was judged that some other mode should be thought on; which was, that a number of superintendents should be appointed by the Conference, to have the inspection of the whole connexion. It is here to be observed, there was not so much as a thought that any thing should be done without the concurrence of the Conference; for my own part, I was indifferent about the matter, and whether such a scheme would be for the better or no, I cannot say; it might have its use, and certainly would be liable to great abuse. However, the whole of this meeting gave great offence; the secret manner of the meeting, and the place where

it was, all contributed to raise violent suspicions in the minds of all the preachers who were not at the meeting. All, whether of the church party, or otherwise, reprobated the Litchfield Meeting; and multitudes of angry letters were sent up and down; so that I may, in the softest language, say, that little conventicle, though very harmless, did no good.

In 1795, our Conference was held at Manchester; and at the same time and place, another Conference was held by a multitude of trustees and others, who were strenuous for what they termed, the *old plan*. Great liberties, I understood were taken by many in that assembly, with the characters of many of the preachers, who were not of their way of thinking, and much warmth was shewn, not much to the credit of the parties, or to the honour of the cause. Several messages passed to and fro, from that meeting and the Conference, to little purpose. At length nine preachers were chosen to draw up a plan of pacification, in which all were supposed to agree. In the mean time we received a very disagreeable letter from the society at Nottingham, which seemed to threaten a breach in that place. It was a difficulty to tell what to do, and something was thought necessary immediately to be done, and therefore was judged necessary to send some messengers from the Conference. Mr Joseph Taylor and I were requested to undertake that disagreeable errand, and to use our utmost endeavours to promote peace and unity. We set out post haste, and

wished to get into the town before we were known. But that was impossible, for we were recognized, before we entered the town. We called the leaders and stewards together that evening, wishing to know what their grievances were. They had a great deal to say, and some things we thought deserved attention. They complained how tyranically they had been treated by some of the superintendents. Several of those complaints were of a long standing, and as the men were not present to answer for themselves, we thought they ought to be forgotten, especially as they confessed they had been served with men who had treated them otherwise, and for whom they expressed the highest regard. However, that we might bring the end of our journey to some conclusion, we wished to know what would satisfy them. It was pretty easy to see what they wished for was, to have the whole management of every thing themselves; that they might choose their own preachers, leaders, stewards, &c. so that the preacher must obey their orders in every thing, having no power in any thing. It is easy to see that a scheme of this sort must effectually detroy the itinerant plan; of course could by no means be complied with. After much talk with them, it came to the article of stewards alone; these they pleaded were the disposers of the people's money, and of course were accountable to them. It was observed, the people gave their money freely for the carrying on the cause of God, through the instrumentality of the preachers, and that the Con-

ference had always supplied them with such preachers as they judged would be useful among them, so that the people had no reason to look any farther; that to place the preachers in such circumstances as they appeared desirous of, would prove a very great snare to them, and in time would endanger our discipline, and perhaps our doctrines too, as it manifestly had done among the Dissenters. They could not say much against these arguments; but still held fast, the having the appointment of stewards, urging, that as matters stood, a steward was intirely at the caprice of the superintendent; so that if the steward did not dance to his pipe, he would displace him. We told them, they might appeal to a quarter-meeting, and surely he must be a very ignorant, confident man, who would face a quarter-meeting, in so bad a cause. For the preacher to have no sort of power over the steward, would be to subject him to a state of servitude which we thought no man of sense would consent unto. It would be a temptation for a preacher to curry favour with the steward, well knowing if he did not, he must fare the worse for it. For my own part, I observed, I wished for no higher power than the deserved affection of the people, whenever I have forfeited that, I ought to sink into silence. But still a preacher ought to have some sure foundation, that he and his family may not be at the caprice of every malapert steward, who may take it into his head to act the tyrant, and thereby harrass a man out of his life. That all our stewards are not of

that turn, I am sure; and that very few are so, especially such as know men and things. Some have grieved very much that better provision was not made for the preachers and their families. But there are men bred in the country, in the most sordid parsimonious manner, and think that is the way that the preachers and their families should live.—Men of this complexion, some of whom I have seen in office, would be a very great plague to the preachers.

We wrangled with them till a very late hour on Saturday night. On the Lord's-Day we suspended our debates, believing we could spend the sacred day in a more excellent manner; accordingly we preached both morning and evening, to crowded congregations, and as they might wonder why my companion and I should be absent from the Conference, I met the Society and simply told them the import of our errand, and intimated to them the respect the Conference had shewn them in deputing two of their body to give them a friendly meeting.

On Monday morning we began our wrangle anew, and after much talk, the conclusion was that the superintendent should choose one steward, and the leaders should choose the other, and thus our debates ended. But had I known what was passing at the Conference during our absence, and how the men of Nottingham would have acted in the course of the year, I should have rested contentedly at Manchester. For during our absence, the ever detested act of pacification passed, in which there

must be a majority of people, leaders, stewards, trustees, and consent of Conference, before a serious body of people can be permitted to comply with the command of him who said—*Do this in remembrance of me.* And wherever the majority is against it, the minority are left to shift for themselves. By this absurd decision, a worthy set of people, the flower of our society, at Chester, were thrown overboard. They were not permitted to have the ordinance in our Chapel, and had built a new chapel in a very central part of the city, rather larger than ours, and wished us to have it; but the above unrighteous decree, totally cut them off. I confess I was very much inclined to run my chance with them; but my love to many of my brethren, my abhorrence of divisions held me in. I am certain, divisions weaken the general cause. However, I have entered my protest against the unjust decree in the Jounral, as a proof of my disapprobation of it to the generations to come.

A scene opened this year, which threatened the most terrible rent, which had ever befallen the Methodists. It was introduced by a succession of productions under fictious names, as Martin Luther, Paul and Silas, Aquila and Priscilla, &c. These epistles, which indeed were long enough, were sent, I suppose, to every circuit in the kingdom, and perhaps to other nations too; not only preachers, but many of our respectable private members, were honoured with those placarts.—They were drawn up with no small degree of art,

and calculated to gain the affections of such as received them. There appeared much truth and a pretence of uprightness to run through the whole, so that many were highly prejudiced in favour of the writer. At length he appeared openly, by publishing a pamphlet, intitled, *The Progress of Liberty.* This virulent production, found many to espouse the cause of its author; many things he had gleaned up and published for facts, without any proof. Many hints were thrown out calculated to prejudice the minds of the public, against the preachers, especially the seniors.—This pamphlet was eagerly bought up, and spread from sea to sea. Such as wished to find some objections against the preachers, thought they now had the desired occasion. The preachers in London, wrote to the chairman of the district, in which Mr. Kilham, the author of the above pamphlet, was, to call a meeting, and try to make him sensible of the impropriety of his conduct, in publishing a pamphlet, calculated to asperse the whole body of preachers, in so scandalous a manner.—The meeting was called, but it answered no other end, than that of giving him fresh matter for slander and reproach; and finding that he had won over a considerable party to espouse his cause, it made him the more confident, in so much, that he appeared bold enough to set all his adversaries at defiance; and I suppose he thought, either that the Conference durst not exclude him, or if they did, that he would become the Bell-weather of a

very large party, both of preachers and of people. Thus matters went on in a very contentious and distracted manner, till the Conference; and many of the preachers thought very favourable of him, till his trial came on; but then, hearing him make so lame a defence, and owning that he had asserted many things without any sort of proof, they saw a little more into the man, and his motives, and of course their minds were changed; and having heard his poor defence, they viewed him in a proper light. Much lenity was shewed him, he owned; but he demurred to the legality of the court. He pleaded for a public hearing; that is, that his trial should be in the public chapel, and that all might come forward to hear and see, and all that chose might be permitted to speak. This by no means, could be admitted; for every united body have a right to try their own members; and as for witnesses, there needed none; for the witnesses against him, were his own books; if he could vindicate them, he was clear; if not, there could only be two things, one of which must be done; the one was, to own his fault, the other was, for the Conference to pass what censure, or judgment they thought proper. Several days were taken up in labouring to convince him, that he had acted wrong in publishing so many things, calculated to prejudice the whole nation against the preachers, and thereby to render their labours ineffectual: and the greatest part of what he had written, was either conjectural, or upon misin-

formation. But though he waa confounded, and had little to say for himself; he appeared confident enough, judging from his abbetors he had little risk to run; for it seems, that he had been encouraged on his way from Alnwick to London, and a considerable nnmber of preachers had been corresponding with him, and viewed him in the light of a reformer, till the Conference; and then when all his bold assertions were put to the proof, they saw things in a different light. Indeed some hints were thrown out, that the Conference durst not expel him, his party was so strong, that let his cause be what it would, he must be kept in, or we must sink; nay, that he had some terrible matters yet in store, and that if he was discarded, those works of darkness would be brought to light. At length it was put to the vote, which was that of his expulsion, without a single voice to the contrary. In giving our vote in Conference, all that are for the question stand up; it is then reversed, and all who are against it stand up; the vote of his expulsion passed both ways; and to render the matter more firm, the sentence was written in a book, and laid on the communion table; and all who believed his sentence just, were requested to sign it, which was done by the whole body, I believe every individual, except myself; and the reason why I did not, was, because it was my office to deliver the sentence of Conference to him, which if I had not believed to be just, I should not have done. Such was the conduct of the Conference, with respect to

Alexander Kilham; and I firmly believe, that all who took the lead in that transaction, were led by the strictest uprightness, and in the fear of God. But many up and down the kingdom judged otherwise, and reprobated the conduct of Conference in the highest degree, so that many of us found warm work, when we returned to our respective circuits. He was deemed a kind of martyr, and he published a long detail of the proceedings of Conference; and truly while a man is writing, he has no one to contradict him, he may write what he pleases, so it was in that unfair statement; but he was sure it would pass current among his partizans, and multitudes were bought up and given away: as also various other pamphlets which he had published; collections, subscriptions and private gifts flowed into him in great abundance, so that it was in reality a lucrative affair; and wherever he went, they flocked from all sides to hear and see this wonderful man, with whom the Conference had taken so much pains; insomuch, that he who had been twelve years an itinerant preacher, and scarcely known, from almost a cypher became one of the most popular men in the nation.

We had really a troublesome year, and much hurt was done, but more especially when a majority of trustees could be found on his side; there they violently took our chapels from us, and herein shewed that they were a set of unfaithful men. It was once thought adviseable to commence a suit in the King's Bench, to try the legality of such unjust

proceedings; but considering the tediousness, expences, and uncertainty of litigations, we judged it best to try to build new chapels where we had a prospect of doing good, and so leave the robbers in possession of their spoil. I call it robbery, and so it is; for these chapels were built by public collections and private subscriptions for the Methodists; that is, such as meet in the yearly Conference, as for a little junto to draw of and call themselves *the Methodists*, or a *Conference* is a mere deception. It is true in some places they have done us a very great kindness, particularly in Huddersfield, for we have obtained a far more eligible station, and the prospect of better congregations: but no thanks to the robbers for that.

The Conference came on at Leeds, in 1797, and it was confidently given out that a vast number of preachers would join what, they call, the New Connexion. A vast concourse of people assembled at Leeds, and Messrs. Kilham and Co. took a vacant Baptist chapel, and formed themselvss into a Conference; several of our preachers seemed to waver, and as we understood, attended their meetings as well as ours; and several we thought would join them, and in the issue three, and only three travelling preachers actually joined them*. They took in several local preachers, some of whom we did not choose to accept, and that they began a formal rent, and have planned cir-

* Two of whom have left them.

cuits, districts, and conferences; set up the book trade, and printed our Hymn Book and various other books in our catalogue, on mean paper, &c. that they may sell them at a lower price. Their cause does not prosper, and I should wonder if it did; a system whose foundation is laid in misrepresentation, calumny and falsehood; letters written in the confidence of friendship, in times of hurry and warm debate, published to the world, and perhaps far from being verbatim, the writers having reserved no copies, I say a Connexion founded thus cannot be of God, and therefore is like the house built upon the sand. In the latter end of December an accident happened to their champion which took him off; a small bone stuck in his throat, and though it was extracted, yet some vessel broke so that it proved his end. A life thus closed in the very height of so much disturbance raised in the church of God, would naturally lay a foundation for various reflections, not in favour of the agent; and various things were said; however his friends said he died in much peace. But before I close this unpleasant subject, I would make a remark or two.

We see however obscure, or useless a person may be in the church and state, yet they may be extremely hurtful, and though not instruments of good, yet may be the instruments of much harm; we have many instances of this in history. It is certain, that during the twelve years that A. K. travelled in the connexion he was of little use, as

Mr. Pawson has made appear from the minutes, tracing every place where he travelled, and the numbers, &c. of the societies; and truly, he made so small a figure, that I am inclined to think many preachers did not know him: I never heard him, but I have been told, that his gifts as a preacher, were rather beneath a mediocrity. But I am not acquainted with any man that ever entered our connexion, that ever did half the mischief. I fear in Lancashire and Yorkshire, many are driven into infidelity, and to eternal ruin. A fool may so fire a house or a town, that all the wise men in it cannot extinguish the flames.

Again, I would observe; suppose I am in one of the most regular families in the kingdom, and am determined to act the dark ill-natured spy: I have my dooms-day book, in which I mark every little slip, in word or deed, I put it down with my own meaning, or comment upon it; after I have waited for a convenient season, I bring into judgment this partial chronicle, against the person or persons with all the ill-natured reports, that I have been capable of scraping together: might not the most innocent characters appear as black as midnight? Now, if that may be the case in a private family, what shall we say, concerning so large a body, or community as the Methodists? That this was the case and conduct of Mr. K. must appear to every impartial enquirer into his mode of proceedings. It is true, he made many awful appeals to God, for the purity of his intentions in all he did; if it was so, it is for

him so much the better; he is gone, and in the great day must stand in his lot.

I would further observe, that when persons become advocates for a party, they will act very inconsistent with their natural turn of mind; from Mr K.'s pamphlets many were made to think that Methodism was a very expensive system, and as if the people were fleeced, and half plundered; but they soon found they have a much more expensive scheme to support; but having embarked they could not in honour quit their newly painted vessel. This I know particularly in Yorkshire, that many persons in a degree of affluence give exceeding little, and multitudes that are poor giving nothing at all; and even they who are the most liberal, do not spend half so much in the support of religion as they would in following the maxims of the world: But it is an easy matter to make a handle of any thing to support a violent party. I would strictly caution every person, preacher or not preacher, to be careful of making rents in the church of God. Let the motive be what it will, the work is bad, and certainly it is doing the work of satan. The harm which has been done by this awful breach in many places will not be repaired in years. Nothing can hurt the Methodists, if they do not hurt one another. Mr. K. has thrown out many hints, as if their preachers were really making a gain of the people, and more especially the old preachers; there are none who travel in the connexion, that have been longer than myself; of course, I am one that is implicated

in this condemnation. I now write in the presence of him who sees the secrets of all hearts, and shall fairly represent my own case, and very likely it may be nearly that of many senior preachers.

I begun to preach among the Methodists occasionally, now and then, in the year 1760. In the beginning of the year 1761, I might be said to begin to travel, that is, I supplied the lack of service of several preachers, when they were sick, or went to see their friends at a distance, and particularly in Birstall circuit, which was then of great extent, and also in Leeds; and this I continued to do till August, when I set out for the Conference at London. What I did was gratis, not even having a penny for the turnpikes, except that the steward of Bradford circuit, gave me once half-a-guinea, and when I set out for the Conference the steward of Leeds circuit gave me fifteen shillings. I had a little money of my own, and some articles to dispose of; the latter I left in the hands of a person to sell for me, which he sold, and being poor, disposed of the money, and soon after died; so that business was settled.

I set out for London, and from thence into Wales; here my work was rugged and disagreeable enough: I had no quarterage, no travelling expences, now and then a shilling or half-a-crown was put into my hands. Sometimes I was obliged to dine and lodge at an Inn, and to pay both for my horse and myself. In this manner I passed the year, preaching as I could, sometimes under cover,

and often in the open air, even throughout the winter, which some may remember, was very severe. Sometime before the Conference, I made an excursion into Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, counties in which none of our preachers had ever set foot. It appeared to me, that in Pembrokeshire, there was a probability of doing good, as I preached several times in Pembroke town, and in various other places; accordingly I was sent from Leeds Conference back to Pembrokeshire, where every thing was quite new, nor had I one shilling given me, either for the expence of my journey thither, or for my support when I got thither. But it may be said, How did you live? I lived upon my own stock, till providence raised me friends. I formed a circuit, of about two hundred and fifty, by Christmas; and at the end of the year, I went to the London Conference; but still at my own expence, except some small matters which a friend here and there might give me, which could not amount to much, as they were generally poor. From the Conference at London, I was appointed for Castlebarr, in Ireland; here for the first time I received thirty shillings from Conference for my expences on the way. Fifteen shillings I paid for a place on the out-side of the coach to Bristol, besides the expences on the road; twenty-seven shillings, I paid the captain for my passage to Dublin, besides provision, mate, sailors, &c. When I got to Dublin, I had about a hundred miles to travel to Castlebarr, and even there my allowance

was very short. I think when I left Wales, my stock, or property was about thirty pounds. It was considerably reduced by the time I got to Castlebarr. I staid two years in Ireland; and from Limerick I came to Manchester Conference. My stock of money was now reduced to about fifteen guineas. It was thought there was a probability of raising a society at Glasgow, and I was appointed to make trial; and out of my fifteen guineas, I gave nine pounds for a horse, saddle, &c. I received from the Conference three guineas, to take me to Glasgow, a place where we had no society, no place to receive me, no place to preach in; strong prejudices to oppose; and a long, cold, dark winter before me. How I passed my time there, is already related. My second year in Scotland was agreeable, particularly in Edinburgh; there all my wants were abundantly supplied.

In 1767, I left Scotland, being appointed for Chester; I bought a horse out of my own pocket, nor do I remember, that I had any thing for travelling expences. When I came to Chester, my property amounted to six guineas. Judge now, how rich I was become, after near seven years hard toil and labour. In Chester, I married a wife with a little property, the greatest part of which I have lost by a person breaking. From Chester we were appointed for Dublin, and two guineas to take us thither; there we had all things richly to enjoy. From thence we removed to Corke; meantime my wife bore a child, which we were under the ne-

cessity of putting out to nurse, my wife being so greatly indisposed. All I received that year, for my wife, and the nursing of the child, was either four pounds or four guineas. From Corke we were appointed for Manchester, and I think it was either three or four guineas I had to take my wife and child thither. I will further add, for twenty years, what I have received for preaching, has not kept my family with food, and I can assure my reader, we do not keep an extravagant table.

Now let any of Mr. K.'s abbetors judge what cause there is for all the reproach and slander which he has raised against the old preachers.—Nay, let them judge between him and me, in one instance, he was appointed from Newcastle to Aberdeen, where every thing was provided, a house, fire, candle, stipend, for himself and family; a large friendly society, and fifteen guineas to take him thither. I was appointed from Limerick in Ireland, to Glasgow, above six hundred miles, no society, no lodging, no place to preach in, no friend to advise with, nothing for either board or quarterage, and three guineas were all I had for the whole. Now, I say, let his friends judge between us. He came among us a poor servant, and it is not surprising to me, if by one means or another, he has not left some thousands behind him.—If it should be objected, I am boasting, I may say matter of fact has compelled me; and I write thus in the just vindication of myself, and my fellow labourers who have borne the burden and heat of the day;

so that Mr. K. and many others have entered into, and enjoy the fruit of our labours, which many of our junior brethren gratefully acknowledge.

Several things concurred to make the years 1796 and 1797, a trying season to me, such as I pray God I may never meet with again. But they are over, yet the remembrance is truly bitter to me. In many storms I have been foolish enough to expect fair gales, till I arrive at the haven of eternal repose; but I have in this been disappointed.

However, in those stormy days, we had some fruit in Oldham circuit, especially in Saddleworth. I left that rough valley in a very promising situation in 1789, but there had been a withering time, and we found them very low; but the Lord revived his work amazingly, so that the chapel was far too small on the Lord's day, and in different places where we preached in private houses, on the week days, we had good congregations, and not without fruit.

My next remove was to Halifax. Here I had laboured in years past with much satisfaction. I might have expected something extraordinary, as we had heard of a wonderful revival, and of scores being converted in an evening; but if so, there had been a dreadful failing away; for certainly they were in a very low condition. The matter was, that during the noisy time, which was called the revival, all discipline was laid aside; sensible people were shocked and disgusted at seeing such irregular and unscriptural proceedings; little fruit

appeared; many poor men run themselves out of breath, in staying late at nights, and neglected their families, and even their labour, and of course run into debt, without taking that conscientious care to discharge it. I doubt that is an evil too general. I think a few more such revivals would destroy all religion from amongst us. I believe oftentimes God begins a good work, but poor ignorant men will needs take it out of his hands, and by noise and clamour, striving to work upon the passions of people without their judgments being informed, bring it into confusion and contempt; and by this means the enemy gains no small advantage; hence it is, that, in general, those noisy hurries terminate in dreadfull fallings away, and awful deadness. I have ever been fearful of damping or hurting the work of God, and therefore have encouraged things which I did not approve of; thinking there might be more of God in those convulsions than I was aware of. But to speak in the softest terms, many, very many, of those hasty converts have proved like the stoney-ground hearers, in the time of temptation have fallen away. Indeed there were many said to be converted, who were not known either before or after that time. For the way was, if they saw a person that appeared serious, for eight or ten to get round about them, and two or three to be speaking to them, biding them believe, or something to that effect, while others were vociferating as loud as they could in what they called prayer, using the most irreverent

language; others asking them, "do you now believe?" nay say "you do believe," and if a word could be extorted from them, by way of assent, then it was echoed, another was set at liberty, so they then sung, *Praise God*, &c. From thence they set upon another and leave the late convert to shift for him or herself; so that they neither know whence they came, nor whither they went, and many of them are heard of no more. Now if there is indeed a work of grace upon their hearts, they ought to inquire from whence they came, and how that work began, and appoint a time and place where they may be farther instructed, by having their judgments informed in things, which are essential, and if they can read, point them to suitable passages of scripture, and direct them to meet in class with some proper leader, so that the work may be established, and the divine seed properly nourished, and the work confirmed in their souls. But nothing of the sort is done. Indeed instruction and information are much neglected, and the means which lead thereto almost forgotten. And this personal negligence leads to the neglect of family duty; and hence it is, that the children of many who profess religion, are as wild and ignorant as those whose parents pretend to know nothing of the matter. It would be well if all our class leaders would take up this cause in good earnest both in their families and in their classes; I am fully persuaded it would turn to a good account. It would be well to bring forward what they hear from the

pulpit, time after time, it would excite their attention; and it must be a poor sermon indeed if there is not something either in the way of encouragement, caution, reproof or information all of which are certainly necessary in their place. We have many useful books and pamphlets, in which there is much matter in a small compass; but they are scarcely known, and are like a treasure which is hid and therefore of no use. The Methodists certainly have advantages superior to any other body of people upon the face of the earth, and might be more wise and holy than others in every respect.—And notwithstanding all their privileges, it may be asked—*What do ye more than others?*

In 1799, I removed to Bristol, I could have wished to have found this venerable mother church in a more lively situation than what it was really in. The wound which was made by the division, a few years before, was not healed. I think both I and my colleagues did what we could to bury old grievances; but the deadly effects of the old enmities were not destroyed. My hands hung down, fearing I was labouring in vain, and spending my strength for nought. Week-night congregations were small, the classes did not meet so well as I thought they might; this bowed down my spirit, and often made my hands weak, and my knees were feeble. And yet there are many excellent ones in this city, who will be found in the book of life.

In the month of May, I made an excursion into Cornwall; in which I confess I was highly gratified

both there, and in my way thither, particularly at Plymouth Dock. On the Lord's Day I preached in the forenoon at the Dock, and at two at Plymouth, and administered the Lord's Supper to a considerable company of communicants, and returned to the Dock, and preached at six. Being under the necessity of being at St. Austle the next day, and the coach seting out the next morning at six from Tar Point, which lies on the other side the water: a friend having sent me word he should be glad if I would take a bed at his house; the evening being fine, about a dozen, chiefly young persons, took a boat, and being singers they sung several hymns, which I felt very sweet; and as we passed by several first rate men of war, which lay at anchor, it brought the men upon deck, but I did not hear one scoffing word from any of them. I do not remember ever to have enjoyed a little trip with greater satisfaction in all my life. I likewise met with very kind treatment at the house of my kind host, and slept comfortably for the first night in Cornwall. The next morning at six, set out for St. Austle, and when I came to Liskard. I found by some means, preaching was published for me there that evening, I was sorry I could not stay; for it is a noted place for Deists, as I am told, and especially for the disciples of Mr. Paine, and as it was known that I had answered his Age of Reason, I understood many of that fraternity intended hearing me; I met with very kind treatment at St. Austle, and had their chapel well filled two nights.—

A kind friend took me in his carriage on the Wednesday to Truro, where we had a crowded audience, and a good congregation the following morning. I feared my time would not allow me to get as far as Penzance, and the Land's End; but the kind friends so ordered matters that my wish was gratified. Therefore on Thursday, I came to Falmouth, where Mr. Wesley had like to have lost his life, but all is peace now. We had a full chapel, and several preachers were so kind as to give me the meeting. Friday, May 16, I came to Helston; but the night was very stormy and rained much, and the people living wide, our congregation was not so large as was expected.

Saturday 17, came to Penzance, and, as in every place before, was received with much kindness; and in the evening I walked to Newlyn, the native place of Mr. Jaco. Sunday morning I had a sweet season at Penzance, in speaking from *Phil.* ii. 5. In the evening we were a little at a loss how to proceed, the chapel was too little, and the wind was so high there was no preaching abroad; but they removed such benches, as were moveable, and as many got into the house as could, the remainder stood at the windows. But we were warm enough within. However I hope the labour was not in vain. May 19. I was resolved to gratify my curiosity with a sight of the Land's End, and really a tremendous sight it is: the high rocks, with the deep caverns, caused by the turbulent waves, made

every thing look awful. Here Mr. C. Wesley made the verse—

"Lo, on a narrow neck of land,
'Twixt two unbounded Seas I stand:
Secure, insensible," &c.

I wished to have made a little trip to the Isles of Scilly, but time would not permit. From the Land's End I went to St. Just; and although they had just enlarged their chapel, yet it was well filled. One would wonder where the people came from; for St. Just is but a village which lies on a point of land among rocks and mines, and appears to have few inhabitants near it. —I returned after preaching to Penzance, and on Tuesday I went to St. Ives, one of the most agreeable towns for situation in Cornwall. It is in the form of a crescent in the bottom of a fine Bay, which opens into St. George's channel, and a place of considerable trade. Their chapel is large, and it was well crowded with many of the better sort, and I think some clergy. I had liberty in pointing out the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. I partly expected to preach the day following at Copperhouse, a place so called on account of many copper works being in the neighbourhood; but as I could only preach at noon, and the people could not leave their work at that hour, so I passed on to Redruth. Here the enlarged chapel was quite well filled, and I was entertained with much

kindness and respect by a family whom I have heard much spoken of, viz. the Harpers', and a number of christian friends gave me the meeting. The Methodists have Redruth to themselves, it may be called the established religion; for their church is a considerable way out of town, and there are no Dissenters except a very few Quakers.

Thursday 22. I preached at Gwenap, and their enlarged chapel would not hold the people; but the wind was so high that I could not preach abroad, so as many crowded in as possible, and the rest around the windows. The next day I went to St. Agnes: Cornwall abounds with saints, and I hope with many of the right sort, even such as God hath made saints. This is a small town which lies among rocks and mines, and they have enlarged their chapel, which was well filled, and as there had been a considerable work, I enforced *Heb.* ii. 1. and hope it was not in vain, though I was sorry to hear of a refractory spirit manifested in some. However, as my visit in Cornwall was that of friendship, and in no official capacity, I did not think it proper to interfere in any disputes, only giving a word of advice where I thought it was likely to do good. From thence I returned through Redruth to Tucking-mill, a small village containing but a few houses, yet there is a chapel, which will contain, perhaps twelve hundred hearers, and although the afternoon and evening were exceeding stormy and heavy rain, yet the chapel was well filled, and I had much liberty. The night continued very

stormy, and there was no probability that either the chapel in Redruth or Gwenap, where I was to preach on Sunday, would contain half the people that were expected to attend; for it was given out twenty miles round about, that I should preach in what the Cornish term, *the pit;* but Mr. Wesley calls an *amphitheatre;* that is, a large hollow, surrounded on each side with an eminence, which will hold abundance of people; and it is astonishing how it excites the country to flock together, when it is reported that any one is to preach there.—Moreover, it is remarked, that it is sure to be a fair day when there is to be preaching in the pit; however, my faith was put to the stretch, as it was so stormy a night. But I was told, a number of young men spent a part of the night in prayer; yet in the morning it looked very unpromising, and was so wet, that I was obliged to preach in the chapel at Tuckingmill, and we squeezed as many in as we could. However, before I had done, it cleared up, and the sun breaking out, the street in Redruth was quite dry at noon, and at half past one, thousands were gathered; I stood in the most vacant place, and urged upon them that awful passage, *Job* xiv. 10. All were still as night, listening with deep attention, even the quakers mixed in the crowd. From thence we hastened to the pit, and to be sure, it was amazing to see horse and foot flocking from all parts, and some carriages. My friend who accompanied me, said, he thought there were a thousand horses: however, I suppose, there

might be some hundreds; and a multitude of poor little ragged boys on all sides, came to earn a penny by holding the horses, so that they were kept at a proper distance from the congregation. I do not remember ever preaching to so great a multitude, except once on the Green, at Glasgow. It was truly an awful sight. But I cannot say I had that liberty, which I have sometimes. Indeed, I had a charming time at Tuckingmill in the morning, and at Redruth at noon; but I seldom find that sweetness three times running. Besides, I had exerted myself the two former times, particularly in the street at Redruth, so that my strength rather failed me, insomuch that I grew somewhat hoarse; and perhaps my gracious Lord might see it meet to leave me a little to myself, seeing he takes gracious methods to hide pride from our eyes and keep us dependent upon himself. It is amazing how such a spot should ever be chose for a place to preach in, amid rocks and mines, and scarcely a house near it; and that it should continue to excite the curiosity of people to come from such a distance to hear the word of God, in a wilderness. As I had a considerable distance to travel and preach twice the next day, it was thought adviseable to proceed to Truro, as that would shorten my journey near ten miles; so here I rested in peace and plenty, humbled under a sense of God's amazing goodness, and my own vileness, yet hoping I had done something for God.

Monday 26. We set out pretty early, and stopped at a place called the Indian Queens, to breakfast. From this neighbourhood came that worthy man, John Murlin; and I saw his elder brother, a serious old man, ripening for glory; though I could perceive him very anxious respecting the legacy left by his brother; I told him, it was in safe hands, and would be paid at the appointed time. What a temptation, or a snare, is this world? even to good men. We got to Bodmin by twelve o'clock, twenty-three miles from Truro, where I preached to the smallest congregation I had in Cornwall. Though it is a principal town, and where the assize is held in summer, yet I find our interest is small in it.

From Bodmin, I crossed the country, about fifteen miles to Port Isaac. The road was so very bad as almost to set us fast in some places; and very hilly. However, we got in time to preach to a crowded audience, and were cordially received by an old disciple, an Israelite indeed. The situation of this small town, is singular. It lies at the bottom of a narrow creek, and in a narrow compass, surrounded on all sides, by very high hills, except the opening to the sea; and it does not appear that it can be enlarged, it is so inclosed on every side. However, the gospel has found its way thither for many years, and not in vain.

Tuesday 27. We had to remount the hills out of Port Isaac to Camelford, where I was to preach at noon, and although it was the middle of day, and

not many Methodists in the town, yet we had the chapel filled, and a precious time it was, I believe to the people as well as myself, so that I trust my labour here was not in vain. But having a stage of sixteen miles to Launceston, where I had to preach in the evening, we did but just arrive in time to preach to a crowded audience; and had considerable liberty in describing the way to the kingdom to be through tribulation. Here I hope the word was made profitable, and here ended my excursion through Cornwall. This I must say for the Cornish, both preachers and people, they treated me with very great kindness, and shewed me much greater respect than I deserved. There would be no great cross in itinerating in this manner: where in every place all things we wish for are made ready to ones hand; groups of kind friends waiting in every place to receive one, and crowds assembling to hear, are exceeding pleasing; and all the company in every friends house looking up to one, as to a superior species of being. How flattering to vanity, and what need of a humbling ballast? How different to our circuits in the general, where we must experience a humbling reverse? Amid all the kindness in Cornwall, the Lord gave me a humbling sense of my own unworthiness, which kept me pretty low in my own esteem.

I wished to have paid another visit to the loving society at Plymouth Dock, on my return, but time would not permit; and not knowing but that I was to preach at Tiverton in Devonshire, the next day.

It was necessary that I should be at Exeter by noon, orty-four miles ; I therefore rose early, and truly the morning was lovely, and the front of my chamber opened into a fine rural country ; the winged choristers were all awake, and their different notes were charming ; but my business required haste, I got to Exeter by one o'clock ; but hearing nothing from Tiverton, I was very glad to rest where I was. Exeter is delightfully situated. I walked through the spacious Cathedral, saw the monuments, the library, the skeleton of the young woman who was executed some years ago, as I was told, for the murder of her child. But however agreeable the situation of this city is, religion is at a very low ebb in our connexion ; I had the smallest congregations here that I have seen since I left Bristol. Yet there are a few sensible lively souls even in Exeter.

Thursday 29. I preached at Taunton, and looked into the large church from whence that great and good man Joseph Alliene was ejected. I venerate the places where those worthy men laboured, and what a loss did the Church of England sustain when her rulers expelled from her connexion two thousand such men as Joseph Alliene, Richard Baxter, and Philip Henry. Such are the effects of pride and bigotry : Lord save us from them.

Friday 30. I came safely to Bristol, and found my dear family all tolerably well—All thanks be to God ! I stand amazed at his goodness to me ; even this little tour impresses a fresh sense of all his mercies upon my mind. But I feel pain that the work

does not thrive as I could wish to see it in this circuit, and yet there are many very precious souls, whom I have cause to love, and who, I believe walk humbly with their God! The Conference drew on, and a brother having been dead some time, at Lambeth, and leaving me joint executor, with his widow, the property being in London, in different hands, and a considerable number of Legatees, it seemed necessary that I should be on the spot, in order that I might do my best to see the property collected, and the legacies paid; I therefore left Bristol after being one year there, and removed to London, where I and my family arrived August 20, 1800. Having now taken notice of the most material matters which have occured during forty years of my ministry, and sixty of my life: I must here close, perhaps finally. The above space of time has been filled up with mercies innumerable from a gracious God. He hath borne with my numberless blunders, inconstancies, and imperfections, and I hope the time and labour has not altogether been in vain; a vast number of my junior brethren have got before me, having finished their course and entered into the joy of their Lord, while I am still in the wilderness, still in the field of battle: they have entered the haven of rest, while I am

Still toss'd on a Sea of distress,
Hard toiling to make the blest shore.

Too, too many during the above period, have

turned aside, and plunged back into the world again, while I, O infinite mercy! O boundless love! have been happily preserved; preserved even when I otherwise should have departed from the living God.

"Turn aside, a sight admire,
I the living wonder aim;
See a bush that burns with fire,
Unconsum'd amidst the flame."

As it is highly probable I may never trouble the public with any farther account of so unworthy a subject as myself; there is one thing which I would pointedly notice to all my brethren in the ministry, and that is, to beware of spending to much time in company among their richer acquaintance; but spare a little to look into the habitations of the poor; the poor have the gospel preached to them; our Lord was poor; he associated with the poor; and, I can assure my brethren, we have the greatest number of pious souls among the poor; do look into their poor habitations; they cannot invite you to a dinner or a supper, they have it not in their power; but if you look into their cottage or garret, they will receive you as an angel of God; and as I hope you wish to do them good, I can assure you that a few words spoken to them personally, will do them more good than a hundred pompous and popular harrangues. If this method of visting the poor, in their own habitations was more attended unto both by preachers and

leaders, it would have a blessed effect, and save many from backsliding, and consequently from eternal destruction. What I recommend to others, I try to do myself, and always have satisfaction therein. My day is far spent; and I wish to do all the little good I can, so that I may fight the good fight of faith, and finish my course with joy, through my never-failing *Redeemer*.

# SERMONS,

*UPON SEVERAL*

# IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

*BY THOMAS TAYLOR.*

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# SERMONS,

*UPON SEVERAL*

# IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

*BY THOMAS TAYLOR.*

# *INTRODUCTION.*

THE following Sermons have already appeared in public; but have been some years out of print: my being often asked for one or another of them, is a proof that they have met with some degree of approbation. My own judgment is, that, they will be useful, or I should not reprint them. Utility is what I aim at; both in writing and preaching; so that the curious will find little entertainment in the following essays. They were delivered to considerable congregations of plain people, and such are they in the general who hear the pure gospel. Concerning the matter of the ensuing Sermons, they testify of Jesus, *the way, the truth, and the life,* the ransom found out for ruined sinners, and who saves to the uttermost all who come to God through him. With respect to the mode or manner, it is simple, and I hope clear, seldom making long periods, and generally divided into two or three divisions; for the obscure essay manner, making the text little more than a motto, however, in fashion, is what I totally disapprove of; and am sorry when I hear any of my brethren affect it.

Two or three are printed verbatim, as they were delivered, having previously written them; the others retain the leading thoughts, but not all the express words; but I do not know that a single idea is either added, or left out.

I have often wished that several of the senior preachers had left a few Sermons behind them, as specimens of the doctrine, and manner, which God has so singularly owned; I think it might be of use to the following generations. For there may arise men of a different cast, both in doctrine, and life to the present race of itinerant preachers; and a few useful Sermons might be as so many monuments of the truth, as it is in Jesus, and may induce some to ask for the old paths, wherein is the good way, that they may find rest for their souls.

*Leeds, Nov.* 30, 1803.

# SERMON I.

## *On the General Depravity of Human Nature:*

Being the

## SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON,

*Preached in the High Church-Yard, at Glasgow,*

APRIL 6, 1766.

*Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.*
EZEKIEL xvi. 2.

THEY that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. Our blessed Lord came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Men must know their disease or they will not seek for a cure: so the sinner must know, yea, feel himself a sinner, or he will not seek for a Saviour. If we content ourselves with forms, however decent, systems however true, we rest in the husk, we do not penetrate the shell, much less the kernel of vital religion. Nay, we may be very decent in our outward deportment, and yet be in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.

The Jews, the only people who professed to know God, in the time of this prophet, had deeply revolted from the Lord; and yet many of them kept up a form

of religion, though amazingly destitute of the power. —They readily heard the prophet, and he was to them as a lovely song; but still it had no effect upon them*. The Lord complains by another prophet, that, *The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming: but my people know not the judgment of the Lord*†. Thus blindness of heart prevailed, and forgetfulness of God, and yet they laid it not to heart. Nay, they are accused of the most atrocious practices ‡; and yet we find in them little sensibility of the matter. It was highly necessary that the prophet should sound an alarm, and set before them, in very plain terms their woeful state, and as the text expresses it, *Cause them to know their abominations*. Now transfer all this, and much more, which might be said to the present times; yea to this land, and even to this city; and see if there is not cause for the same complaints, and that in a very high degree; and consequently for the same command to be enforced which we have in the text. This is a duty highly incumbent on all the ministers of Christ. My present attempt must be, through divine aid—

First, To consider some of the prevailing abominations of the present time.

Secondly, Why they ought to be known.

Thirdly, The true remedy for them.

First, Then, respecting the abominations in our

* Ezek. xxxiii. 32. † Jer. viii. 7. ‡ Vide chap. xxii. 8.

land. We will survey the inner apartments of the human house. And truly, these are something like the chambers of imagery shewn to the prophet in the eighth chapter, the actions in which, though perpetrated in the dark, yet were seen by those eyes which are in every place beholding the evil and the good.

1. There is pride, that first born child of perdition which opposeth and exalteth itself above all that is called God, and which in the heart of man cries out, *I will set my seat beside the throne of God, I will be like the most high**. That is, I will have my own way; I am determined to follow my own will: For, *Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice? I know not the voice of the Lord,* nor will I obey him †. Here is a source of real mischief, the origin of all rebellion, and the motive to every thing which is audacious. This cursed pride and self-will, turned angels into devils, and man out of paradise; opened the flood-gates of ungodliness, and brought death into the world and all our misery; and renders the possessor eternally wretched.

2. Unbelief is another abomination: and is as far from obedience to God, as hell is from heaven. This has spread its benumbing influence over the whole man, yea, over the whole world. For the scriptures have concluded all in unbelief. We may repeat creeds and embrace systems, and yet

* Isa. xiv. 13. † Exod. v. 2

be as much shut up in unbelief as ever the Jews were, of whom it is said, *They did not enter the promised land because of their unbelief* *; and that our Lord, in one place, did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief. Yea, they were cut off because of unbelief: and that unbelief keeps them still at a distance from God, as it does millions who are called christians in the present day.—Now he that believeth not, makes God a liar; and therefore the wrath of God abideth on him.

3. Ingratitude is another of those abominations which God abhors, and is a real curse wherever it is found. It is a deadly root, a root of bitterness; even where it appears against our fellow-creatures it is highly criminal and base, and a character which is justly contemptible; but when it exerts its cursed influence against God, the author of all good, we are at a loss for terms which may sufficiently shew its malignity. It is the very breath of the old serpent, the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity; the sin of angels and the curse of mankind.

4. Nearly allied to this, is, the carnal mind which is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be. This fountain of death hath pervaded human nature throughout. Hence that antipathy against every thing that is truly serious; that is, against the image of God. How often hath this spark of hell been kindled into a blaze of dia-

* Matt. xiii. 52.

bolical persecution? into rage and slaughter against the Lord and against his anointed; against his ministers and against his cause? Surely then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. No, however decent the veil may be, which is thrown over the carnal heart, it is but a whited wall, a painted sepulchre. This was thoroughly made manifest in the history of our Lord, and in the Acts of the Apostles, as well as in long and numerous pages of church history.

5. Greediness for the present world is another feature in this execrable character. And it is an abomination which lies so concealed, so entrenched behind plausible pretences, that it is no easy matter to discover it to the party concerned. It sometimes even wears the aspect of duty, and like satan, can quote scripture with a view to wrest it to wrong purposes; yea, to the destruction of many who are drowned in this terrible perdition. Indeed the love of money is the root of all evils, and has been a dreadful pest in the church of God. Its ravages are far and wide, far more extensive than the conquests of Alexander. It is peculiarly hurtful to those whom providence has favoured with plenty of this world's good. Such frequently turn the blessing into a curse: They choak the good seed, and in the end prove unfruitful. Therefore, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

6 The present enlightened age is remarkable for despising real, experimental religion. We

boast much of our improvement in arts and sciences; it is a pleasing sound, and there may be some truth in it; but I fear it has but added little to the cause of real religion. Nay, on the contrary, has not a kind of learning taken place which has almost set aside the deity, and substituted a phantom, called reason, instead of the scriptures? Thus making the word of God of none effect. Theories and hypothesis have been invented, and a kind of vain philosophy, falsely called science, which flatters the pride of man, especially as it is accompanied with a kind of dark, metaphysical reasoning, which is utterly out of the reach of the bulk of the human race; and therefore cannot be from the supreme being; seeing he does not amuse his creatures with dark speculations and empty sounds. This kind of infidelity was brought into Britain along with Charles the Second. The whole tribe of beggarly wits made their court to him and his infidel courtiers, when all real seriousnsss was cried down, and lampooned under the opprobrious names of hypocrisy, cant, fanaticism; yea, rebellion and every thing which was bad, ridiculous and vile. These merry atheists held out the hellish poison in gilded cups, in a kind of brilliant tawdry language, which well suited that half-thinking generation; and what was wanting, in other respects, the stage made up by imposing on the nation; so that experimental and practical religion was set at nought, and even the counsel of the Most High despised. The torrent of buffoonery nonsense was so rapid, that even men

of superior sense were unwarily carried down the stream, and sunk in the vortex of infidelity. Thus, we find, that orators, poets, historians, philosophers, and critics, all became the craftsmen and abettors of the great Diana. I wish I could here spare the pulpit; but alas! it has not spared itself; its language has been too expressive, and its sound has gone throughout all the land.

Thus real divinity has been decried, and set at nought, yea, dressed up in a bear's skin, so that it might be frightful and disgusting; and a kind of political divinity has been substituted in the place thereof, and is the divinity in vogue at the present time; yea, and is growing and spreading far and wide, a horrid monster in the sight of the God of heaven. 'Tis no wonder, that lifeless, languid forms obtain place even amongst the decent part of mankind, utterly destitute of the rich energy which ever accompanies the genuine gospel of God our Saviour. His gospel is the power of God unto salvation; it is the savour of life unto life. It turns the hearts of the disobedient unto the wisdom of the just. It opens men's eyes, and turns them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God. It is not in word, but in power, a power which all the fiends of hell cannot withstand. It changes the very habits and affections of the soul; so that where sin did abound, grace doth much more abound. What is all the excellency of speech or the enticing words of human wisdom, in comparison of this soul-transforming word of God,

which is the savour of life unto all who believe in Jesus?

Now does any of this rich energy appear in our modern tinkling symbols? Are not their brilliant jingles mere lifeless sounds? And do they not leave their trifling admirers dead as they found them?

7. Unprofitable conversation is another evil which calls for a remedy; and though it has not that shocking appearance, that some other evils have, yet it is like the little foxes which spoil the vines, and ought to be avoided as we would avoid the pestilence. It often tends to evil speaking, backbiting and slander, which hurts the party concerned; and often ruins the characters of the innocent, and is quite contrary to that royal law, which says, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

8. The tree being thus corrupt, 'tis no wonder the fruit should be of the same kind. Hence gross immoralities break out on every side; so that what the apostle said of the Jews and Gentiles may be very justly applied to our land: *They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their way: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their*

*eyes**. This is a woeful picture of "the dignity of man," and not more woeful than true. It speaketh for itself. The prophet said, *The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars*†: That is, it is deeply rooted within, and it is manifested outwardly even in your religious assemblies. And is not that the case in this nation? Formerly it was remarkable for its strict attention to all the outward forms of godliness, and then open wickedness hid its shameful face; but alas, the crown is fallen from its head; yea the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint.

Our English vices have found their way into Scotland; and Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, cursing, swearing, lying, cheating, uncleanness, with every species of wickedness that can be mentioned. Nay don't you see instances of scorn and contempt before your eyes in those troublesome boys, and and others present, Where are your *duce-elders* that they suffer such behaviour‡?

O what a change is there in Scotland, in external matters, for the worse? Profanation of every de-

* Rom. iii. 12—19. † Jer. xvii. 1.

‡ Some young scoffers, a thing formerly not endured in Scotland. The word *duce*, is a Scotism, which signifies, grave, serious. The elders in Scotland, are the same as our churchwardens, in England; and though they took no notice of the disturbers, yet they took notice of my mentioning them; for I was not suffered to preach any more in the High Church-Yard.

scription is increasing by rapid steps: Nay it is spreading like a prevailing inundation in thee, O Glasgow! Thy gold is growing dim, thy fine gold will soon be changed; and thy tottering crown will soon fall from thy head, and thy filthiness will be found in thy skirts, yea, thine iniquities will find thee out!

In the twenty-second chapter of this prophecy we have a terrible catalogue of the evils, and abominations practised in Jerusalem, and truly they were of an alarming magnitude, and of a black and deep die. But I doubt we shall equal, if not excel them in our land; more especially if we consider the superior advantages and privileges which we enjoy. For we may remember, where much is given, much will be required; and though times of ignorance God winketh at, yet now hath commanded all men every where to repent.

9. Time was, when the players were not permitted to insult religion and common sense in Scotland, and especially in this city? but I am sorry that those pests of civilized society, those fomenters of infidelity are gaining ground continually. O, where is your love to sound doctrine, or the author of sound doctrine? while you allow, and countenance those lying vanities which turn the truths of God into fables, and sap the very foundation of pure and undefiled religion.

This is a melancholy picture, which I have been drawing; but I can appeal to all men of candour and reflection, that it does not exceed the original;

nay, it falls vastly short thereof. I may just add, it is an unpleasing, yea, an unwelcome subject for a minister to dwell upon: and nothing but a consciousness of its being his indispensible duty, can engage him thus to set his face as a flint in the way, and expose himself to the rage and contempt of mankind. This shall lead me—

Secondly, to consider, why men should know their abominations.

First, It is necessary that they should know them, that they may loath them; this is the general way in which the spirit of God works; and this made the prophet cry out, *Woe is me! I am undone, I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell amidst a people of unclean lips**. And again, in the name of the people, he cries out, *We are altogether as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses, are as filthy rags*†. From the same consideration the psalmist cries out, *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me*‡. Thus must we loath ourselves in dust and ashes before the eyes of infinite purity. The pride of human excellency must be stained, the loftiness of man must be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man laid low; that sensible of his vileness he may cry out, God be merciful to me a sinner.

2. Men must know their abominations that they may forsake them. *He that covereth his sin shall not prosper*, let the covering be what it will he cannot take confidence therein; *but he that confesseth and*

* Isa. vi. 5. † Isa. lxiv. 2. ‡ Ps. li. 5.

*forsaketh his sin shall find mercy.* But it is not to be supposed that men will forsake their sin, till they see the exceeding sinfulness of it. O, how odious is it in the sight of a holy God? How has it debased the soul, and defiled it with every corrupt passion and appetite; with every foul and sordid temper and disposition? What sufferings did it bring upon him who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, when the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. What mischief has the cursed monster made in the world? What cries and tears? What cruelties, oppressions, woes, and distresses? The man is now willing to give up his pleasing sin, his profitable sin, his creditable sin, the sin of his calling or constitution; yea, he is willing to forsake all; to cut off the right hand and to pluck out the right eye; to deny himself of all ungodliness and worldly lusts, so that he may live to him who died for his sins, and rose again for his justification. In such a person there is an holy dread, a sacred antipathy against that source of misery and ruin; so that were there no hell to escape, or heaven to obtain, he flies from it, as from eternal destruction.

3. We shall never cry earnestly to God for the pardon of sin, till we see ourselves sinners: till the law comes home in its spirituality, then sin revives and the sinner dies. He is sensible the curse stands against him, nor will any thing remove it, except he flies to the blood of sprinkling, which speaks better things than that of Abel. But he has often many a painful struggle before he is enabled to fix

upon that rock of eternal ages. His unbelief staggers at the promises, and satan is not wanting to discourage him therein; so that like the poor lunatic child, while he is yet a coming, satan tears him. 'Tis not exactly alike in all, I mean with respect to the degree of struggle and anxiety. We see some are shook over the pit of hell; the arrows of the Almighty stick fast in them, the poison whereof drinketh up their spirits: The terrors of God set themselves in array against them. Others again, like Lydia, have their hearts gently opened, so that they attend to, and receive the glad tidings of salvation without much commotion; her heart being already prepared to receive the ingrafted word with meekness. But let it be violent or gentle, it comes to the same thing; the sinner is made sensible wherein he is a sinner, and as such he comes to that Saviour who will in no wise cast him out.

4. In such a case, how precious must the Saviour be to a soul who has discovered his own wretchedness? Is rest desirable to the weary? Nothing can be more so. How sweet is this rest to the labouring, weary, and heavy-laden soul? who casts his burden upon the Lord and is sustained by him.—Is food sweet to the hungry? We all know it is; and nothing can supply the place of it. How precious then is this bread of life to the hungry sinner, of whom I am speaking? he finds this the true nourishment for his never-dying soul. From this tree of life he takes, and eats, and lives for ever.—Therefore to such as believe he is precious: his

name is precious, and so is his nature, offices, merit, spirit, blood, and righteousness, in a word, he is *all in all*. But then, all this is to the poor sinner who feels his misery, and is made sensible of the abominations of his fallen soul, which makes him cry out—

"I loth myself, when God I see,
And into nothing fall;
Content if thou exalted be,
And Christ is all in all.

5. Ministers must shew poor wretched sinners their abominations, that they may be without excuse. We find this to have been a principal part of the mission of Jeremiah. There seems to have been little hope of his suceeeding among the nation in general.—Therefore, says Jehovah, *Gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land; against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land**. To the same effect, the commission of Ezekiel runs: *Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation, that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even to this very day.*—

* Jer. i. 17, 18.

*For they are impudent children and stiff-hearted: I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, for they are a rebellious house, yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them**. And again, he is to warn the wicked man, lest if he die in his iniquity, God should require his blood at the prophet's hands. *Nevertheless*, says he, *if thou warn the wicked of his way, to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul*†. Nay, this was one end of our Saviour's coming into the world. Hence, he says, *If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin*‡. To some, the Apostle declares, *They were the savour of death unto death*‖. I own that it is but a melancholy reflection to the feelings of a minister of Christ, to think, that he should rise up as a preaching witness against any poor sinner, in that awful day, when we shall give an account of our stewardship. In the meantime, as stewards, we must be faithful, let the consequence be what it will. O then, take heed how you hear, and what you hear; seeing it is not the hearer of the law which is justified, but the doers of the law, they are justified. Many of you speak much about errors; but this is the most dreadful error, to live in an unchanged, unconverted state, to content

* Ezek. ii. 3, 4, 5. † Ezek. xxxiii. 9.
‡ John xv. 22. ‖ 2 Cor. ii. 16.

yourselves to live without God, and without hope in the world; so living and dying in your sins, you shall lie down in eternal shame and everlasting burnings

Thirdly, I now come to point out the true remedy for all these abominations; this is the most delightful part of the subject; nothing can be more pleasing for a minister to dwell upon; and nothing can be more delightful to the sensible sinner to hear.

First, This cure, my dear hearers, has its origin in the deity himself; no less a cause could procure so great an effect. God, who surveys all events, however distant, at one glance, saw the misery and ruin, man was subject to, and into which he would undoubtedly fall; took care to provide a remedy, a remedy, that astonished heaven and confounds hell; a remedy suited to the dire disease, in which all the divine attributes harmonize, and in which they all sweetly illustrate each other. Here justice and mercy meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other. Glorious truth, God is love! God *So loved the world*, fallen, ruined, wretched and undone as it is, *He so loved it, as to give his only begotten Son, that a believing sinner might not perish, but have eternal life.* Wonderous love! Wonderous mercy! Wonderous grace! Wonderous condescension! Well might angels sing glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will among men.

Here God is manifest in human nature; and comes arrayed in the likeness of sinful flesh; in

poverty and pain, labour and toil; in hunger and thirst, in shame and sorrow; and through the most astonishing abasement, opens a fountain for sin and uncleanness. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should, in so strange a manner, become the sons of God!—Surely in this was manifested the love of God, that while we were sinners, Christ died for us. Here is God in our nature putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Here is the creditor laid in arrest for the poor insolvent debtor. The injured dies for the injurious.

2. The Man Christ Jesus is the adorable person by whom this reconciliation is accomplished.—God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their iniquities unto them. But having reconciled all things to himself, by the blood of his cross, he is our peace-maker, that he might reconcile both unto God in one body, by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to them who were afar off, and to them that were nigh. No matter whether they were Jews or Gentiles, moral or immoral, they are all redeemed and reconciled by the same precious blood. By him we can obtain pardon; for though your sins be red as scarlet, he can wash them all away, can blot them all out as a cloud, and leave no trace of guilt behind. All your abominations may be so covered, as to be as a stone cast into the depths of the sea. Not only to pardon, but to purify, so that no spot may remain.

*For Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might wash it with water by the word, and present it to himself a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing* *.

3. But remember, all this must be done in his own way. It was hinted above, that we must know our abominations, that we may loath and forsake them. This will not be done without genuine repentance; and therefore Jesus is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, that he might give repentance to the impotent children of men. That is, by his meritorious undertakings, the spirit of grace is poured out upon men, that they may repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.—This is a leading doctrine. Hence it is said, *Rent your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord* †. *Repent and believe the gospel* ‡. *Except ye repent, ye shall perish* ‖. *The times of ignorance God winked at, but now hath commanded all men every where to repent* §.

If it is asked, what is repentance? I answer, *He that covereth his sin shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh it shall find mercy* ¶. Now I ask, in the name of the eternal Jehovah, has this repentance taken place in you? Or are you yet living in your sin? If so, you are living on the brink of eternal perdition.

4. But then, without faith it is impossible to

* Eph. v. 26, 27. † Joel ii. 13. ‡ Mark i. 15
‖ Luke xiii. 3. § Acts xvii. 30. ¶ Prov. xxvii. 13.

please God; *For he that believeth not, makes God a liar*. Nay, such an one cannot see life, for the wrath of God abideth on him.* I hope many of you are sensible that true faith, saving, justifying faith, is not barely believing a set of doctrines, however true or excellent; and yet I fear multitudes rest their cause here, and proceed no farther. You often speak of errors, here is an error of a capital nature indeed; an error of a damning nature; I wish you may be deeply apprised of its malignity. True faith purifies the heart; works by love; and therefore influences the whole conversation. Wherever there is true faith, there is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, patience, meekness and gentleness; yea, all the gracious fruits of righteousness.

5. Thus flying to Jesus, he is a never-failing remedy; he is the tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations; the true balm of gilead; the only and infallible physician for diseased souls to fly to, and who heals all that need healing; that is, who feel their need of healing. However habitual or deep-rooted your abominations may be, they are not too virulent for Jesus to cure. If you are an old sinner, Jesus is an older Saviour. If your sins are of the crimson dye, his blood can wash out every stain. Hear what he says, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.*— To him that is athirst will I give of the fountain of the water of life freely. It is a faithful saying, and

* 1 John v. 10.

worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief of sinners. A repenting Manasseh, a weeping Magdalene, a self-abased publican, a praying thief, a trembling gaoler, all find redemption in the death and wounds of the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.

6. You need not say, Who shall ascend into Heaven to bring him down? Or who shall descend into the deep to bring him up from thence? O, no; he is near that justifieth; so that just now you may look unto him and be saved. God will now be your refuge and strength; now he will be a present help. Call upon him in the time of trouble, and and he will hear you, answer and save you. Can any thing be so secret from him that he cannot see it? *Doth not he fill Heaven and Earth?* Surely his eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good; and therefore, ever at hand to relieve the wants of all his poor creatures.

Behold now, even now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation. To-day, if you will hearken to his voice, hearden not your heart. I have been warning you in the most public manner* for the space of six months, through much labour and sorrow; through reproach and many lies; and would not rise up a preaching witness against you in the great day of the Lord. No, right glad should I be, to have many for a crown of rejoicing in that great day, when the secrets of all hearts

* I preached three months running out of doors.

shall be disclosed, when we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. O then fly, fly my fellow sinners, to this fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; so that when your sins are sought for they may not be found; but that every abomination may be swept away, and that you may be like the king's daughter, all glorious within: so that it may be said of you at the last day, *These are they who came out of great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

To whom with the Father, and ever adorable Spirit, one Jehovah, be equal honour and glory, by the church triumphant, world without end.—— *Amen.*

## SERMON II.

# *The Sorrows of Time, and the Joys of Eternity:*

Being the Substance of

## A FUNERAL SERMON,

*Delivered in the City of Chester, January 26, 1768,*

Occasioned by the Death of

## MISS MARY GILBERT.

THE FLOWER FADETH.——*Isaiah* xl. 7.

*Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.*—LUKE xxiii. 28.

IT has partly been the custom of all ages, both among Heathens, Jews, and Christians, when death separated any of their particular friends from them, not only to make lamentation over them, but also to improve the opportunity, either in speaking something in the praise of the dead, or to the edifying of the living. With regard to the Heathen, profane history abounds with panegyrics and encomiums pronounced over them by their orators; and very often greatly exaggerated what they called their virtues, and extenuated their real

crimes. With regard to the Jews, it appears a practice among them, from the circumstance of David lamenting the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, 2 *Sam.* i. and likewise his oration over the grave of Abner, 2 *Sam.* iii. as well as the pathetic lamentation over the death of the lovely, though unhappy, Absalom, 2 *Sam.* xviii. 33. And again, we find Jeremiah lamenting the death of the good king Josiah, 2 *Chron.* xxxv. 25. And as to the custom of christians, I need only refer you to the case of Stephen, *Acts* viii. 2. Having so many precedents, I hope no one will censure our conduct as superstitious, for improving the opportunity which God has put into our hands, by taking to himself an amiable young creature, just in the bloom of life. Only, I must tell you, the present discourse is not intended to give any swelling encomiums in praise of the dead; but, if possible, to edify and stir up the living, to give all diligence in making their calling and election sure. Let it suffice for the present, that we have good grounds to believe she is happy.

I was at a loss for some time, to think upon a suitable subject to address you from. Several texts occurred to my mind, but I could fix upon none, till the passage just read in your hearing, offered itself. The words are connected with one of the most awful events that ever did, or ever will happen. An affair, upon which our everlasting all depends. Our blessed Lord was now travelling in the greatness of his strength, and treading the wine-

press alone. He was going in the depth of sorrow to Calvary. He was bearing the rugged cross, and labouring under the same. Great companies of people were following, with doleful sighs, and among the rest, mention is made of some pious women, who wept and bewailed so uncommon a sight. But Jesus, as it were, forgetting his own sufferings, turns his compassionate eyes towards them, and with a heart full of tenderness, says, *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.* He warns them of the impending ruin of Jerusalem, and the calamities that would attend the same; and as if he had said, "Dear daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me; I am now going to fulfil the scriptures, and my death will be matter of great joy to all nations, and that to all eternity. But, alas! for you, I pity your deplorable circumstances, for heavy judgments hang over your heads, for this unhappy city has now filled up the the measure of her iniquity, and shall soon feel the same."—But I think we may, without perverting the text, apply the words to the present solemn occasion. We may assert, we have no need to weep for her that is gone to glory, but for ourselves who are left behind. She is safe, and her labour is ended; but we are still in a world of trials and temptations of sorrows and tears; all which we have still to grapple with. But to come directly to the matter in hand. The text naturally divides itself into two simple heads:

I. That there is no reason to weep for such as are gone to Jesus.

II. There is cause to weep for ourselves, who are left behind.

III. I shall attempt an application suitable to the present occasion.

I. That there is no reason to weep for those who are gone to Jesus.

1. Their warfare is entirely over. That the christian's life is a perpetual warfare, scripture and experience abundantly evidence. For, says the Apostle, *We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, and against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*, Eph. vi. 12. And again, we are exhorted, *To fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold of eternal life.* And again, in this combat we are exhorted to *strive lawfully.*—Which passages plainly intimate, that here we are called to contend for eternal life; also we are exhorted to *put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand in the evil day.* All which shew, that this is a place of fatigue and toil, and will be such till we land safely on the happy shore of everlasting rest. But they who are gone to Jesus, have safely put off the harness, and shall learn war no more. Each can say, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*, 1 Tim. iv. 7. O, yes! they know the full meaning of these words, *We are more than conquerors through him that loved us*, Rom. viii. 37. The

glorious crown which had been long reached out to their view, they now seize as their own; the land, which was at a distance, they fully enjoy, *Their eyes see the King in his beauty*, Isa. xxxiii. 17. Judge, my dear hearers, is there any occasion to weep for such happy souls? Do any weep to see their friends return victorious from the field of battle? No; on such occasions they rejoice and triumph: And much greater cause have we to rejoice over our dear friends, who are safely arrived at the haven of peace.

2. No more temptations can assault them, either from the world, the flesh, or the devil. But while here it is otherwise; as Hannah had her enemy to prove her, 1 *Sam.* i. 5. Joshua, had satan at his right-hand to resist him, *Zech.* iii. 1. Our gracious Lord, had the subtle fiend to tempt him, *Matt.* iv. The enemy desired to have the apostles, that *He might sift them as wheat*, Luke xxii. 31. And the great apostle had *The messenger of satan sent to buffet him*, 2 Cor. xii. 7. Thus we see temptations have been the common lot of all that were determined to flee from the wrath to come. But those who are safely landed, are freed therefrom, and far out of Satan's reach; for he cannot shoot his fiery darts over the battlements of heaven.—Such are now triumphing, *Having overcome the great red dragon, through the blood of the Lamb*, Rev. xii. 11. They had indeed one that could truly sympathize with them, being tempted in all points like unto them, *Heb.* iv. 15. Yet

they had as much as they could bear; though they are now enjoying the presence of the Triune God, and the company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. Therefore there can be no cause to weep for them.

3. They who are gone to Jesus, are out of all danger; but we know, that while we are in this vale of tears, we are always surrounded with snares. Hence we meet with instances in scripture of many who fell foully, if not finally. David and his son Solomon are instances of the former, 2 *Sam.* xi. 14. 1 *Kings* xi. &c. Indeed every day, and every hour, bring their peculiar temptations with them; and if we consider how many fiends of hell are continually seeking our final ruin, we may well think our danger great. There is the present world; how dangerous is it? and how many fall a prey to the same? Its alluring charms are very enticing, and often insinuate themselves into our affections, before we are aware. How hard a matter is it to keep our garments from being sullied? But they that are with Jesus, are out of the reach of any thing that can annoy them; their souls are secure, and nothing can give them pain, for they are

> "Free from a world of fear and sin,
> "With God eternally shut in."

If we consider, how many pernicious doctrines are advanced in the world, which spring from the

bottomless pit, and how many corrupt examples, that contagiously spread themselves, we have need always *To fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into rest, any of us should come short of it.* Hence we are warned against many hurtful errors by the word of God, and such practices as are contrary to the divine will; and are frequently exhorted to care and diligence, to watchfulness and perseverance. But they who are with the Lamb, are free from every danger, and safe for evermore.

4. Pain and sickness are at an end with those that are with Jesus; as well as all the painful sensations of hunger, thirst, cold, heat, &c. While here below, the followers of Jesus are liable to these, as well as the rest of mankind; and are often made to groan under the same, 2 *Cor.* v. 2. But it is not so with those that are at rest: A shivering ague can no more discompose, or a burning fever, or gout, or stone, afflict them in that happy clime; or a trembling palsy incapacitate them from mingling with the blessed. These things very often have a tendency to weigh us down in our present state, and give others great uneasiness as well as ourselves. But the glorious inhabitants of that city shall no more say, *I am sick*, Isa. xxxiii. 24. *Their sun shall no more go down, neither shall the moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended*, Isa. x. 20. *There they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun*

*light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water: and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes*, Rev. vii. 16, 17. It is

> "A city so holy and clean,
> No sorrow can breathe in the air;
> No gloom of affliction or sin,
> No shadow of evil is there."

No; *There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together*, Job. iii. 16.

5. They who are landed safely, can serve God better than such as are left behind. Their knowledge is far more excellent than that of the greatest saint upon earth; and consequently they are more capable of glorifying him: Here an apostle could say, *We know but in part*, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. There are many things here to retard our progress, and render our best services very imperfect: Such as ignorance, weakness, imprudence, and the remains of corruption, which often make us ashamed of ourselves and our performances; as we find many wanderings, much deadness, little life and spirit in all we do. But there they are constantly praising him, *Ps.* lxxxiv. 4. And is not this a very desirable thing? to be ever doing his will, and that with a perfect heart, and a willing mind? Besides, we are apt, through weakness, to be weary, even in the means of grace; and these frail animal frames

require rest. But no weariness is there; they are continually crying, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty*, Rev. iv. 8. Now which of us would not desire so great a happiness?

6. Such as are with Jesus, are far more happy than they could be in this vale of tears, though, while here they very often, no doubt, tasted of that happiness, and their cups ran over. But now they are free from all impediments, free from all ignorance, weakness, temptations, and from all pain; they are therefore enabled to serve God more perfectly, and consequently they shall be more happy than ever they could be here. Their happiness is now complete. Here their ears were often much offended in hearing the horrid language of the wicked; there, nothing is heard but the praises of God and the Lamb. Their eyes here were often offended at seeing things which were contrary to the will of God; but now they behold him that is the dear object of all delight and pleasure. They shall see him eye to eye, and face to face.—Their hearts were often grieved in seeing religion make so slow a progress in the world; but now they see the servants of God continually triumphing in his praises, and exulting before the throne.—Well may the Prophet cry out, *Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him*, Isa. iii. 10. And well might Balaam say, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his*, Num. xxiii. 10. Thus, my brethren, considering these things, there is no cause to weep for those that are

gone to Jesus, 1 *Thess.* iv. 13, 14*. And this shall lead me to the second thing proposed.

II. That there is cause to weep for ourselves and children.

1. We are exposed to every danger which they are delivered from. Their warfare is accomplished; but we are still engaged in ours. We have those fiends of hell to grapple with, which they are more than conquerors over. We have our temptations and crosses yet to bear, which they are happily delivered from. We have those bodily infirmities to encounter, which they have left behind. But for our eternal comfort, we have the same rock to lean upon which they had. Did the Lord sympathize with them? He will sympathize with us also. Did the Lord grant them strength in the trying hour? And so will he grant unto us. Was he with them through the waters, and through the fire? So will he be with us also. Did he grant them grace in the time of need? So will he grant us if we ask of him. Then let us not be discouraged, but come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

* See this delightful and entertaining subject sweetly enlarged upon, by that most amiable writer, Dr. Watts, in his lovely Treatise upon the Happiness of Separate Spirits; a book which I had not seen when I delivered the present Discourse, but which I most cordially recommend to all the travellers to Mount Zion.

2. We have reason to bewail and lament our manifold short-comings and imperfections; and this sure, is matter of weeping and of godly sorrow to every one that knows any thing of his own heart. Alas! how imperfectly is every thing performed! When do we hear with that attention, or read to that profit we might, or pray with that fervor, or receive the sacrament with that faith we ought?—What day passes over our heads that we have not reason to lament some omission or commission?—What trial have we to bear, that we have not reason to lament something of our misbehaviour under it? What temptation do we repel with that vigour that we might? What day is there that passes, in which vain and unprofitable thoughts have not entered our hearts? These are all matter of godly sorrow, and would inevitably sink us lower than the grave, were it not for the atoning blood of a never-failing Redeemer. We have need to be humbled on account of these things, and mourn over them daily. And I apprehend every real Christian will be deeply abased before God on that account, as we see those in the days of old constantly were. When we review a Sabbath, how have we failed in every thing? What deadness have we to lament? What wandering, vain, or unprofitable thoughts have we to grieve and sorrow for?

3. There is reason to weep on account of our want of resignation. I think few graces shew more of the real christian. We find, when the Lord had permitted satan to take away all that Job had, how

the good man submitted. *The Lord gave* (said he) *and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord*, Job ii. 21. When good old Eli heard the awful sentence that was past upon his house, he cried out, *It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good*, 1 Sam. iii. 18. In like manner we find David exercising the same heroic spirit, 2 *Sam.* xv. 26. But the most striking example we have, is in our Lord. When the pains of hell began to take hold of him, and the arrows of the Almighty began to fasten on his righteous soul, he cried out, *Not my will, but thine be done*, Luke xxii. 42. May such shining examples truly stir us up, and make us resigned; for every degree of fretfulness or impatience (supposing it does not break out) is a manifest want of resignation. We daily pray that the will of the Lord may be done; and yet, what an aversion is there to submit to the same? We do not love sickness, or pain, or losses, or disappointments; or to be slighted by our fellow-creatures; although such things are permitted for our real good; yet, for want of duly weighing matters, and patiently waiting the event, we are almost ready to charge God foolishly. Surely this must pain every tender conscience, and cause sorrow of heart; otherwise it will make us drag on heavily, as having a tendency to quench the spirit, and consequently to bring darkness upon the soul, which will bow it down, and occasion trouble, anguish, and sorrow. So that you see, our want of conformity to the image of God, is a material cause of weeping.

4. We have need to weep, when we consider that we have the great King of Terrors to grapple with. What it is to die, we know not. That is a business we never yet engaged in. When we have stood by a dying friend, and beheld the grizzly King triumphing, the throbbing breast, the heart-strings irreparably breaking, and the life quivering on the pale lip, and the failing pulse dying away, we see a little of death. But it is little, very little we can conceive. That untried state we cannot form any adequate ideas of; or what pain the final parting must cause.

"Sure, 'tis a serious thing *to die!* My soul,
What a strange moment must it be, when near
Thy journey's end, thou hast the gulf in view!
That awful gulf, no mortal e'er repass'd
To tell what's doing on the other side.
Nature runs back, and shudders at the sight,
And ev'ry life-string bleeds at thoughts of parting."

To see our friends here no more, and to leave these bodies in a loathsome grave, has something in it very disagreeable and averse to human nature; but to appear before God, the Judge of all, and an innumerable company of Angels, has in it something far too much for human nature, unassisted by grace, to bear. But there is such a thing as triumphing over the grave; yet how few know what such a victory is! Surely such are more than conquerors, through the great Captain of their salvation.

5. There is cause to weep for ourselves, when we consider our present connections and situation in life. We are surrounded by numbers of rational creatures, whom God hath made, and for whom he became incarnate; appeared as a worm among worms; subjected himself to the hardships and inconveniences of human life; yea, I might add, all the sinless infirmities thereof, and breathed out a sinless soul in agonies on the cross. Now what return do they make? Do they acknowledge his love, mercy, and goodness? Do they revere his power and majesty, his justice and truth? Ah! no; they trample on his love, pity, and goodness; they spurn his mercy and grace; they set at defiance his law and justice, and say in their hearts, *Who is the Lord, that we should obey his voice?* This is no new thing: No, the rebellion is of an old standing, of ancient date; of the old world it was said, *The imagination of the heart of man is only evil, and that continually*, and that evil heart produced the abominations which appeared in their lives. The new world was soon as bad as the old one; witness the iniquities of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose abandoned crimes grieved just Lot. David beheld transgressors and was grieved; and Jeremiah wept in secret places for the abominations of the people; Daniel wept, fasted and prayed before God; and the little remnant spoke of, *Ezek.* ix. sighed and mourned for the iniquities of the land; and finally, the Son of God wept over abandoned Jerusalem.—Now, I fear, upon the whole, times are not much

altered for the better. Look round and see the desolations of our land; what cursing and blasphemy! What lying and drunkenness! What chambering and wantonness! What deceit and guile! What biting and devouring! What wrangles and religious bickerings! What pride and selfishness, even among such as name the name of Christ! O most compassionate Lord! how great is thy patience and long-forbearance! how infinite are thy mercies to the poor fallen sons of men! Now surely here is cause, abundant cause, of weeping. By this means God is dishonoured; the interests of the gracious Redeemer struck at; much mischief done in the world; while poor sinners are pushing each other into endless perdition and misery! What is there desirable in such a wretched world as this! so checkered with afflictions, so fraught with ruin, wretchedness, misery and discord?

Thus we have cause to weep for ourselves, and equal cause to weep for our children, when we consider how many dangers, snares, and temptations they are exposed unto in this vale of tears.—I shall proceed no farther in a doctrinal way, but shall come to the application. And here it is expected I should say something with regard to her, whose death has occasioned the present solemnity, and who we have reason to hope (hope did I say?) nay, who we have good grounds to be assured is triumphing in the regions of everlasting glory.—My acquaintance with her was but short; nor have I, as yet, the honour of being acquainted with her

parents; but what I shall say, I receive from such as have had the most perfect opportunities of knowing her from her infancy, almost in every minute circumstance of life; nor have they any desire to flatter her character.

*Miss Mary Gilbert*, the eldest daughter of Nathaniel Gilbert, Esq; was born in the island of Antigua, in the West-Indies, in the year 1751. It was her happiness to have parents in whom the Lord had begun a work of grace; and, therefore, no doubt, they did not only pray for, but endeavoured to instill good things into the mind of their daughter, as soon as she was capable of understanding any thing. Perhaps, under God, it might be owing to this, that something of gravity and seriousness always appeared in her from her infancy. In the year 1759, she was committed to the care and tutorage of such as had the fear of God before their eyes, and his love in their hearts; at which time she begun to see her need of Christ, and frequently to pray in secret, and to read the Scriptures much, and that entirely of her own accord; and not only to read them, but if I remember my information right, to write her remarks upon them.

In the year 1764 she came to England to finish her education; soon after which she began to keep a Diary* of what passed betwixt God and her soul,

* That Diary, or Journal, has since been published, with a short sketch of her life, which I think ought to be in the hands of all young people.

which she continued to do to the last. She saw her need of an interest in Jesus, and could not rest without it. The work was begun, and carrying on in a gradual manner. Something like the morning; or, as the wise-man expresses it, like the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Her always appearing serious, and not desirous of the toys that other children are fond of, was not owing to any stupidity or dulness of parts; far from it; for she had a refined understanding, as sufficiently appears by the number of elegant letters which she wrote, many of which a student in divinity would have no need to be ashamed of. So that it was not owing to dulness which made her disrelish every thing of that sort; but because she was really above them. And as for dress and the fashionable amusements, which others of her age and circumstances are engrossed with, she quite disdained them.

The improvement of her interior part, was what she most delighted in, and what she laboured after; and shewed thereby what was the chief exercise of her mind, making all her amusements subservient to that very end. How rare are such shining qualities to be found in this trifling and dissipated age? Nay, how few parents in the genteel line of life, encourage such excellencies in their children? No wonder that such a one should be taken from among mortals; like a flower full-blown transplanted into a more agreeable soil, where none of its fragrance will ever be shed in vain, or its beauty

ever fade away. No wonder that one who ran so speedily, should so soon finish her course with joy, and in triumph enter the regions of everlasting happiness; for though she had not yet obtained the desired rest, yet she continued seeking in every means of grace, and was resolved to follow on till she knew the Lord, until she received the end of her faith, the full salvation of her soul.

On December 28, she was seized with her last illness, viz. a putrid fever, which terminated in her death. Previous to this sickness she had, for some weeks, been favoured with very profitable meditations upon death, and spake of them to such as she could be free with, who advised her to indulge them as they proved so useful to her.

The nature of the disorder which she laboured under, having a tendency to stupify, she felt that influence, and especially in her hearing, which was almost wholly taken from her, as was also her speech. Nevertheless, she, in the general, gave proof that her soul was longing for the appearance of her Saviour, the weary sinner's friend, and was often breathing out wishes to him who was able to save her: and the Lord did not forget his longing captive; for the sighing of the prisoner came up before him.

January 14, she was desirous that the family should be called up to pray with her. She then said that she found herself as she never had done; for she felt such joy and peace as till now she had been a stranger to; that the fear of death was quite taken away, the love of God filled her heart; she

loved him who first loved her, and was longing to be with him. Thus was the Lord preparing her for himself, and finishing the work which he had begun, while she gave all the symptoms of a soul wholly and sweetly resigned to himself, and longing for her desired change. No impatience appeared in the whole of her conduct, notwithstanding her tedious and painful illness, and she retained her reason to the last. For though she could neither speak nor hear, yet she made signs for such things as she wanted. Thus she lay patiently waiting for her approaching change till the 21st, and then breathed out her soul into the hands of a never-failing Redeemer; and though she could not in words express what she felt, yet with her hands clasped, and her eyes fixed, she spoke the language of her soul to be, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Thus finished this amiable young creature, her course with joy, and now is singing the praises of the Lamb in the realms of eternal glory.

And now, my dear hearers, upon the whole, may we be excited to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. May we be stirred up by such an animating example. We see death is no respecter of persons, but comes at all hours, and at all ages. O, who shall be found ready when the bridegroom appeareth? Let us be up and doing, and the Lord will be our helper. Let us aim at conquest, that every thought may be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. She

that is now singing the praises of the Lamb had her struggles. She was sometimes beset with a warm temper, and sometimes with a light spirit; and these she mourned over and lamented. Let us search out our own beseting sins, and the Lord will enable us to triumph over them.

2. From what has been said, what reason have we to be resigned unto the divine dispensations of unerring wisdom? If he disappoints us in any thing, it shall be for our good. If God take away our dear friends, it is that we may find in him a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. The Lord gave, and he hath a right to take away, when and how he pleaseth; and it is meet that we should be wholly resigned. Let this lead us to submit to the dispensations of his providence, not daring to murmur lest we offend; for every murmuring thought is an impeachment of divine wisdom; and who can condemn that wisdom and be clear?

3. What praises are then due to the adorable friend of sinners for becoming our Redeemer? He might justly have left us to have perished in our sins to all eternity. Nor would he have wanted praise had that been the case, for he is not beholden to any of his creatures. But what reason have we to adore him, not only in dying for us, but also in giving us such sweet foretastes of his love in our journey. It is one of the most agreeable sights in the world, to see a saint depart in triumph. It is a strengthen-

ing of our hope, it is a confirmation of our faith, and animates our souls to run the race the Lord has set before us. Glory be to God for all his mercies!

One word now to you, who are the dear mourning relatives of her that is gone to Abraham's bosom. Consider, you have no reason to lament her that is taken from the evil to come. Hark! me thinks if her disembodied spirit could speak to you, it would be to this effect, "My dear and tender friends, weep not for me; my warfare is at an end, and my troubles are over. The Lord has graciously taken me from a world of temptations and sorrow, and landed me safely in these bright mansions, were sorrow cannot enter, and where tears are all wiped away. My danger is past; and my sickness is ended. Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, I adore him that brought me out of great tribulation, and hath washed me from my sins in his atoning blood, to whom be glory for ever. O may you be animated to run the race set before you, so shall you meet me in these regions of bliss and happiness, when we shall part no more."

My dear friends, one and all, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus. Then shall we meet with our dear departed friends who are gone before us, and shall be for ever with the Lamb, and

no more depart from him, but we shall see him as he is, and be happy with him to all eternity.—Which God of his infinite mercy grant, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory now and for ever.

# SERMON III.

## *The Word of God a hid Treasure:*

Being the Substance

## OF A SERMON,

*Delivered at Heptonstall, Feb. 29, 1775.*

Published at the Request of the Hearers.

*In sacris Literis Veritas, non eloquentia quærenda est.*——Kemp.

*Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*—PSALM cxix. 11.

THY *word* (says this servant of God) *is a light unto my feet, and a lanthorn to my path. Thy word is pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.* Job, says, *I esteem the words of his mouth before my necessary food.* Our Lord says, *Search the scriptures, they testify of me.* The Bereans are commended, because they *searched the scriptures daily*, to find the truth of the Apostles doctrine; on which account they are called *noble.*

Now, every word of God is pure, and ought to be attended to by all, and with all diligence.—— Owing to this neglect, is all that barbarous igno-

rance, and irregular conduct, which we see abound, so shamefully almost every where. In like manner, it is much to be lamented, that this is so little attended to amongst many who have some little acquaintance with the ways of God: Hence we find, many speak of the things of the kingdom of God in a very unintelligable manner, which frequently gives occasion to such as seek it against them. The seeing of this so frequently, has given me much pain from time to time.

Let me endeavour, my dear hearers, to stir up myself and you, by beseeching you, to adopt the same method which we here find the royal Psalmist did; *Thy word*, (says he,) *have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.* But to attend a little to the words, it may be necessary to consider,

I. What are we to understand by the word of God?

II. What is implied in hiding it in our heart?

III. For what end are we to hide it in our heart?

1. What do we understand by this phrase? By the word of God, in scripture, sometimes is meant, Christ himself, the essential word of God. *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God*. And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth†.* And where he is described in a more triumphant manner, he is said,

* John i. x. † John vi. 14.

to be *Clothed with a vesture dipt in blood, and his name is called the word of God* *.

Now, although this is not what I apprehend the Holy Ghost means in the text, yet, I cannot help wishing that, even in this sense of the word, the text might be fulfilled in us. For when St. Paul would express the greatest and sublimest things for his believing Colossians, he sums up the matter in these simple, yet expressive words, *Christ in you the hope of glory* †. And when our Lord was about to take his leave of his disciples, he comforts them by informing them, that *He and his Father would come to them, and make their abode with them* ‡; See much more to the same effect, 2 *Cor.* vi. Indeed this is a privilege which every one should be aspiring after, and never rest till they can say, *They dwell in God, and God in them* §. While the the holy one of Israel dwells in you, you are safe; and though you may be like that ship, in which the friend of sinners was, sorely tossed with a tempest, yet all the storms of temptation, all the waves of affliction, cannot destroy you while you have in you the keeper of Israel: Nothing can overthrow you. See much to this purpose in *John* xv. in the beginning, and in *Psalm* xlvi.

2. By the word of God sometimes we are to understand some express and particular revelation from God; and in this sense the word frequently

* Rev. xix. 13.
† Col. ii. 27.
‡ John xiv. 23.
§ 1 John iv. 16.

occurs in the Old Testament. And although these were special messages, sometimes to particular persons, sometimes to particular nations, and sometimes to all men indefinitely, yet we have them left upon record for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the world are come. We find in these express messages, sometimes reproof, exhortation, instruction, or direction, encouragement or consolation, so that we may reap advantage from them all.

Indeed, we have this advantage, that as many parts of the Old Testament were predictions of good things to come, we see them happily accomplished in the New Testament*. Many of the historical parts of the Old Testament are brought in as having happened for our instruction, as well as the types and shadows. Read 1 *Cor.* x. *Heb.* ix. Here I would say, *Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost.*

3. By the word of God, sometimes is meant the ten moral precepts, called in Hebrew, and Septuagint, the ten words of God. They may be so called in an emphatic manner, in that they were spoken immediately by himself. In other cases he spake sometimes by an angel, or by his prophets, or by dreams; but here he spoke directly, without the interposition of any mediator, and the manner deserves our attention. The mountain from

* If the reader would see this to his satisfaction, let him read Dr. Newton on the Prophecies.

whence Jehovah spake was so sacred, that the people were prohibited so much as to look upon it; and if a beast touched it, it was to be stoned, or shot through with a dart. The mountain was enveloped in thick darkness; awful flashes of lightening were seen; loud peals of thunder were heard; the voice of a trumpet waxed louder and louder, insomuch that not only the congregation, but even Moses quaked and trembled; and as for the people, they desired God might speak no more to them in that manner, lest they should die; but that Moses would act the part of a Mediator. See the awful description, *Exod.* xix. compared with *Heb.* xii.

Moses takes care to remind the people of this very important circumstance in the recapitulating of the law. *For ask now* (says he) *of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from one side of heaven to the other, whether there hath been any such thing, as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it. Did ever people hear the voice of God, speaking out of the midst of the fire as thou hast heard, and live* *.

Now, the words of this law, shew in an awful manner what God is; his holy and pure nature, and in like manner what we should be, and then condemn us, supposing we are not what it commands us to be: So that, *As many as are under the works of the law are under the curse* †. But God

* Deut. iv. 32, 33. † Gal. iii. 10.

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Now, the words of this law, shew in an awful manner what God is; his holy and pure nature, and in like manner what we should be, and then condemn us, supposing we are not what it commands us to be: So that, *As many as are under the works of the law are under the curse* †. But God

* Deut. iv. 32, 33. † Gal. iii. 10.

has said, *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people* *. Perhaps this may be what David meant in the text.

4. By the word of God, I in general apprehend we are to understand, the whole revealed will of God, as we have it in the scriptures of truth: And here we are highly favoured indeed, to what former ages were. The Old Testament saints, had but a part of the sacred canon, and a very dark part too, until the blessed Redeemer, the fulfiller of the dark types and shadows appeared. We are blest with the prophecies, and their accomplishment; the types and their great anti-type; so that the one is a happy confirmation of the other. Besides, until the Art of Printing was found out †, it was not easy to come at a bible; perhaps all the Substance of a man's house would not purchase one; but now that difficulty is removed; any poor man may be possessed of that invaluable treasury for a few shillings. Nor was this the only inconvenience former ages had to grapple with; for, until the reformation took place, the bible was locked from the generality, because it was not permitted to be translated into vulgar languages: But now that inconvenience is removed, and providence has fur-

* Jer. xxxi. 33.

† This ingenious and useful art was invented in 1432, and is ascribed to Koster, or Faust, or Shoeffer, or Guttemberg, all Germans, but to which is not certainly known.

nished us with an excellent translation; so that if we are ignorant of the scriptures it is our own fault. This shall lead me to the second thing proposed, viz.

II. What is implied in hiding the word in our heart?

It is hinted above, that by the word in the text, I understand the whole revealed will of God contained in the scriptures of truth. This must necessarily imply a diligent searching of them. We find this to have been the practice with good men in all ages. We see what a dear lover of God's word David was, if we go no farther than his Psalms; and it is a commendation St. Paul gives of Timothy, *That from a child he had known the scriptures*, (and that he might give a proper weight unto their authority, he adds) *which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus* *. It is to be lamented, that this practice is so much neglected, even by such as profess to own the authority of the scriptures. Numbers will talk a deal of precious time away, and will not find time for this salutary employment. The primitive christians paid a very particular attention to the written word, and were mighty in the same; their adversaries knew this, and sought by all means to destroy it. The venerable puritans were exceedingly remarkable in this particular: They were careful, exceeding careful,

* 2 Tim. iii. 15.

that their children and servants should read the sacred oracles; and I cannot help thinking that it is the diligent and constant practice of all who are taught of God, even now.

Indeed, I greatly lament that reading any thing is so little attended unto, quite contrary to every thing which I ever experienced. We live in an age in which useful and experimental books abound in great plenty; and if we make not a proper use of them it is our own fault.

2. Hiding the word of God in our heart, implies, that we understand it as well as read it. For the understanding being the leading faculty of the soul, if it is not employed in what we read, and what we hear, we are not much the better for either. The passions being affected and the judgment uninformed, is like a land flood, it does more harm than good, and is soon dried up again: But when the mind is affected from right views of things, it is like a flowing stream from a never-failing spring. Too many hear sermons with their passions, and if some commotion is raised there (though they neither know whence it comes, nor whither it goes) they account it a great blessing; though perhaps their tempers are not one whit the better, neither do they see any thing clearer. On these persons argument is lost, and all that can be said to the understanding means little. But such do not hide God's word in their heart, and are liable to be turned about with every wind, and to

fall a prey to every pretender, if he can but work upon their passions. The character which our Lord gives us of the way-side hearers is, that, *When they hear the word they understand it not, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart* *. On the other hand, the good ground hearer is said to *Hear the word, and understand it, which bringeth fruit* †. But a man must have the wisdom from on high in order to a right understanding, otherwise the *Vision*, (i. e. the whole revealed will of God) *of all is become as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: And he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to one that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: And he saith, I am not learned* ‡. *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is within him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. So that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: For they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned* §. Our Lord well knew the necessity of his hearers understanding him, and hence he asked his disciples, *Have ye understood these things?* When the Sadducees came, as they thought, with an unanswerable question, he replied, *Ye do err:* How

* Matt. xiii. 19. † Verse 23.
‡ Isa. xxix. 10, 11. § 1 Cor. 11. 14.

so? *Not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God**. We find that when the captives returned from Babylon, proper persons, *Read in the book of the law distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading* †. Without the use of this noble faculty, we may read, and hear much, and profit very little. We may see how this observation was verified in the case of the disciples, they heard him who spoke as never man spake, and yet how amazingly dark and blind were they until he *Opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures* ‡. My dear brethren, this is to me matter of heaviness and sorrow; notwithstanding all the advantages we now have both of hearing and reading; yet how little do the generality understand. O! when shall this reproach be rolled away from amongst us? We see to how little purpose the Scribes and Pharisees read the scriptures; for doubtless they read them, and the prophecies relating our Lord's coming into the world; yea, and were in expectation of his coming; yet, when he did come, how did they receive him? Let the Evangelists inform you. They read of a Messiah who was to *Be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief* §. *That he was to be cut off for the sins of his people* ‖. *That they should smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek bone* ¶. That the sword of Jehovah

* Matt. xxii. 29. † Neh. viii. 8. ‡ Luke xxiv. 45.
§ Isa. liii. 4. ‖ Dan. ix. 26. ¶ Mic. v. 2

should *Awake against his fellow* *. But, behold, they expected a Messiah to come in the pomp and splendor of the emperor of the Universe, and seeing him assume nothing of that kind, their cry was, *Away with him, crucify him, crucify him* †. Thus we see how little they understood the word of God which they heard daily in their Synagogues: And how many thousands are in the same unhappy condition even to this day.

3. Hiding the word in our heart, implies, that we experience it. Without this our reading and our understanding will avail but very little. The hungry may hear of food; but if he partakes not of it, that will signify nothing. Supposing you were all sick, or lame, and knew there were medicines of the greatest value in one of these galleries, yet without their application, you might return as sick and as lame as you came hither; the case is exactly parallel. Experience is mentioned in scripture, under such strong, yet well-known figures of speech as eating, tasting, seeing, feeling, &c. It is not sufficient that we understand the theory of faith, repentance, the new birth, and the gracious influences, but that we know by happy experience, what it is to repent, believe, and what that blessed state is called, a passing from death unto li

We can never sufficiently estimate any mercy till we feel the necessity of it. If we were never

* Zech. xiii. 7. † John xix. 15.

hungry, we should not prize our food; or if we were never weary, we should not properly esteem an easy bed: No more will any one have much regard for Christ as a Saviour, who has not felt himself a sinner. Hence we find the most solemn and penitential language used every Lord's Day, to very little purpose. *We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, &c.* This is all solemn truth; but, alas! who is sensible of its being so? The want of this sensibility makes the hearing of Christ crucified a very insipid thing to thousands; so it was to the Jews, to whom our Lord said, *They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick**. All the epistles were addressed to persons who had felt the word of truth to be *The power of God unto salvation*†. Who from being *Dead in trespasses and sins, were quickened*‡; *Who were risen with Christ*§, *and who were brought out of darkness into marvelous light*‖. They must be people of the very same stamp, who can relish the same writings now. It is of singular use to understand the scriptures by experience, and it is the very same in hearing; just like a person hearing of a country through which he has passed; when the cities, or towns, or buildings are mentioned, the hearer's attention is struck, and the idea of every thing is very lively: The

* Matt. ix. 12. † Rom. i. 16. ‡ Eph. ii. 1.
§ Col. iii. 1. ‖ 1 Peter ii. 9.

very same is the case with the man who hears an experimental sermon; the preacher touches the very strings, which he well understands, and can say to the preacher, "Now I know thou speakest truly, for I have felt the very things which thou hast described:" Like the Samaritans, who when they had heard our Lord himself, said to the woman, *Now we believe, not because of thy saying: For we have heard him ourselves, and do know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world**. †

4. Hiding God's word in our heart implies, a cordial love to it. Indeed, whatever we supremely love has the greatest share in our heart: There the miser has his wealth; there the gallant has his mistress; there dwells the fame of the man of honor, and there the drunkard seats his wine, or strong drink. Now it is the character of the good man, that he *Delights himself in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night* ‡. Whatever we delight ourselves in, we can think on it with great satisfaction. And, what an ample field of truth does the holy book of God afford us, what subject can we need which is not treated upon more or less? and the things most necessary to be known, are spoken of with exceeding great plainness. I cannot conclude this article better than in the words of the Psalmist, *The law of the Lord is perfect, con-*

* John iv. 42.

† For a clear description of Experimental Religion, I heartily wish every one would read and consider Mr. Wesley's First Volume of Sermons.

‡ Psalm i. 2.

*verting the soul: The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold: Sweeter also than honey, and the honey comb**.

5. Hiding God's word in our heart, implies, that we take care to treasure it up there, and not easily let it slip. The words seem to allude to persons who lay up either corn, or money, or some such valuable thing in some secure place, where they can really find it themselves, but it is kept safe from others. Thus we find the surprising things which attended the birth of John the Baptist, made such an impression upon all who heard them, that *They laid them up in their hearts*†; the same is said of the blessed Virgin, concerning the sayings of her adorable Son, that she kept *His sayings in her heart*‡. The word of God is like seed which is sown in the earth, which if it abide not there it cannot take root, neither can it bring forth fruit. Indeed, whatever we love, we are very tenacious in holding fast, and do not readily part with it. In temporal things, persons need no cautioning on these heads, but are exceeding careful without much admonition, whether the advice given may respect their health

* Ps. xix. 7. 11. † Luke i. 66. ‡ Luke ii. 51.

or their substance ; and I know no reason but the same attention should be given to the one thing needful, and abundantly more so. *Wherefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest, at any time we should let them slip**.

III. The third general head is, to consider for what end we are to hide God's word in our heart ?

Now there appears a mistake in many who read the scriptures. Some read them as their duty, and think they are doing God some kind of service, if upon a Lord's Day, after eating a good dinner, they will vouchsafe him the honour to read a little in his word, until they drop a-sleep over it. It is no matter what they read, that is out of the question, whether it is, *Abraham begat Isaac*, or *believe in the Lord Jesus*. Doubtless it is our duty to read ; but it is not a duty to rest in. Many read in order to be great talkers, and fancy if they can quote scripture, others must admire their noise as much as they admire it themselves. There are others who read in order to maintain some favourite tenet ;— these will rack and stretch every thing to make it tally with their own nostrum. These are something like the tyrant which I have read of, who was resolved to have a number of men exactly of the same height, such as were too short, he would have them stretched upon the rack in order to make them long enough : Thus, some stretch and

* Heb. ii. 1.

mangle the word of God, in order to make it extend to their measure, but by that means are in danger of making the word of God of none effect.

But to return from this digression, (for which I beg your pardon) we see a more worthy end proposed in the text, viz. *That we may not sin against God.* Let this be our motive in reading and understanding the scriptures.

If we would not sin against God, let us attend to all the threatenings and reproofs in the book of God. These are all necessary, and are something like our quick-thorn hedges, which are intended to keep your cattle in due bounds; for there is a vile propensity in us to break our bounds, and trespass our just limits: The Lord has very wisely and graciously put the threatenings as so many briars and thorns in our way. St. Paul bids Titus *Reprove, that they might be found in the faith; yea, to reprove sharply*. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, and for correction,* as well as *for instruction in righteousness†.* They who get beyond the reproofs, get beyond the teaching of St. Paul, and so growing wise above what is written, grow wise in their own conceits, and thereby are in danger of being deceived

2. If we would not sin against God, let us hide all the cautions in our hearts. There is not an evil we are in danger of, but we are guarded against it;

* Tit. i. 13. † 2 Tim. iii. 16.

and the things we are most in danger of, these we are most frequently and plainly cautioned against. To instance in a few particulars: How often do we find the Lord cautioning his people, in the Old Testament, against idolatry? it would be endless to transcribe the passages; and St. John shuts up his first epistle with, *Little children, keep yourselves from idols**.

Now, what is an idol? Any thing which is put in the place of God; a mite or a mountain; an ass, or an archangel. If every idol in England was to have a temple built, there would not be room to contain them. Money, wine, women, good creatures, bad creatures, all are made into idols;—so that *There are Gods many, and Lords many; yet to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, aud we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him* †.

Again, unbelief is another thing which we are repeatedly guarded against, both directly and indirectly. *The unbeliever shall be damned* ‡. Yea, *He is condemned already* §. Yea, *The wrath of God abideth on him* ‖. And there is one thing said of the unbeliever, that is not even said of the Devil, to wit—*That he makes God a liar* ¶.—It is said of the Devil, that he is a liar, and the father of lies; but it is never said of him that he makes God a liar. Indeed, he has too much sense to do

* 1 John v. 21. † 1 Cor. viii. 6. ‡ Mark xvi. 16.
§ John iii. 16. ‖ John iii. ¶ 1 John v. 10.

this himself, whatever he may prompt fallen man to do. The apostle to the Hebrews gives a summary account of the rebellion of the Israelites, and of their falling in the wilderness, and concludes with these remarkable words, *So we see they could not enter in because of unbelief**. On the other hand, what excellent things are said of faith or believing. See John iii. 14—17. Heb. xi. throughout. What is it which faith cannot do? And what is it the unbeliever must not suffer?

Love to the world is another of the common evils we are very largely warned against. Our Lord seldom preached a sermon, but he had something against this base passion; he bids us go to the ravens, lillies, &c. to learn to cast our care upon him who careth for us. The story of the rich man and Lazarus is one of these kind cautions, put in a very striking manner indeed. In the parable of the sower, we find the same gloomy delight levelled at: *Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up*, to wit, *the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choak the word*†.

In the parable of the great supper, we find, the farm, and the merchandise kept many, who were invited, from coming to the supper‡. St. John, in giving the cautions which he had heard his Lord so frequently repeat, ushers it in with a particular solemnity, addressing himself respectively to little children, young men, and fathers, and what is it

* Heb. iii. 19. † Matt. xiii. ‡ Luke xiv.

he is about to bring forth? Hearken, and he will tell you: *Love not the world, neither the things which are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him**. And our Lord's question is much to the purpose, *What shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul*†. Brethren, let these sayings sink deep into your hearts.

3. If we would not sin against God, let us hide all his commands in our hearts. He himself has made this the standing mark of our being his followers, *If ye love me keep my commandments*‡.—In this respect the Lord is very particular, and suits himself to every state and every condition in life. Are we unawakened, his word is, *Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is unto the sons of men*§. *Come let us reason together;—if ye be willing and obedient ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword*‖. *Turn ye at my reproof*¶. *Except ye repent, ye shall perish***. Thus God will not leave himself without a witness, even in the most obdurate. But, supposing we be awakened, and in some measure sensible of our danger, the express command is, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world*††. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

* 1 John ii. 12—16. † Matt. xvi. 26. ‡ John xiv. 15.
§ Prov. viii. 4. ‖ Isa. i. 18—20. ¶ Prov. i. 23.
** Luke xiii. 3. †† John i. 29.

*take my yoke upon you, and you shall find rest for your souls**. Indeed, it would be endless to transcribe all the encouraging passages which are found in the book of God, in favour of such as are sensible sinners; and all are delivered in the form of commanding; so that duty and privilege go hand in hand together. Are we believers? The word of command to us runs thus, *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him*†. *Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage*‡. *Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds.* Rom. xii. read the whole chap. Likewise, Eph. v. 1 Pet. ii. each throughout. Indeed, all the epistles are written to believers; I wish they were more read and attended unto§. Are we backsliders? See how affectionately the Lord calls after us, three times together, in Jer. iii. Read also his own letter to the church of Ephesus, Rev. ii. and to the Laodiceans, still in a worse condition, chap. iii. at the end.—The case of the prodigal is quite pertinent, Luke xv. How affectionately is he received!

But the book of God does not only speak to particular states, but likewise to particular conditions. Are we servants?—then it is, *Servants obey your*

* Matt. xi. 28—29. † Col. ii. 6. ‡ Gal. v. i.

§ It is a pity every one who is able does not get Mr. Wesley's Notes, in pocket volumes, on the New Testament; they are short, yet full and plain.

*masters, according to the flesh, in all things; not in eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart.* Are we masters?—let us attend; *And ye masters do the same thing unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your master is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.* Are we children?—hear then the word of the Lord; *Children obey your parents in the Lord: for it is right. Honour thy father and mother,* (which is the first command with promise) *that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long upon the earth.* Are we parents?—let us attend unto our lesson; *And ye parents, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* To wives, the command is, *Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, and called him Lord.* Are we husbands?—let us attend unto our duty; *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it.* For each of these relative duties, consider the two invaluable chapters from whence these quotations are taken, I mean, Eph. v. vi

But the divine directory does not leave the matter here; but is yet more particular. Are we preachers?—we are not left without our document. *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* Are we hearers? *Take heed therefore how you hear. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your*

*souls as they that must give an account. Esteem them very highly in love, for their works sake.* In one word, whether kings or subjects, bond or free, young or old, neighbours or brethren, there is something expressly said to each condition. But who attends unto this? This neglect has caused me much concern, and often discouraged me not a little in my public department in life. Much is said by many upon faith, and great blessings are spoken of and the like; but I look upon all as mere fancy, unless they are accompanied with attention to our place and station in life. But there is one point more to consider.

5. It is necessary for our encouragement, to hide the promises in our hearts; and these we shall find very needful in a dark and cloudy day. Thanks be unto God, we find a promise made to every want. Do we want wisdom?—here ye what the fountain of true wisdom hath said, *I will lead the blind by a way which they know not; I will lead them in paths they have not known; I will make darkness light before them*. I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life†. So that if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally to all, and it shall be granted to him‡.* Are we guilty, and feelingly sensible of our state?—He cries from heaven, *I have blotted out thy transgressions as a cloud, and thine iniquities as*

* Isa. xlii. 16. † John viii. 12. ‡ James i. v.

*a thick cloud**. *So that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*†. To attend unto these reviving cordials is of singular use, both to such as are now seeking, and to such as once did obtain pardon of sin. We cannot depend too much upon what God has said, nor too little upon ourselves.

Again, as we are become fallen, ruined sinners, we are become exceedingly wretched. *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble*‡. Full of trouble! How true and full is the description; and how do we see it verified every day. Now the creatures cannot take away the anguish of our spirits. But see how much God has promised in the xli. xlii. and xliii. chapters of Isaiah, read them diligently over. Our Lord promised to send a *Comforter* (unto his disciples) *which should abide with them for ever, even the Spirit of Truth*§. This he will fulfil in his poor, mourning followers even now. See Isaiah lxi. from the beginning; so that *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*‖. Do we feel our deadness, and groan under it? It is a heavy complaint; but we have a redress for this grievance also: *The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live*¶. Again, *I am the re-*

* Isa. xliv. 22. † 1 John i. 8. ‡ Job xiv. 1.
§ John xiv. 16. ‖ Matt. v. 4. ¶ John v. 4.

*surrection and the life: He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die**. Sinner believest thou this?

Indeed, religion without life is a poor uncomfortable thing. There is no running our christian race without life; there is no *Fighting the good fight of faith* without life. No man can quicken his own soul, much less can he quicken that of another; but there is a gracious quickener who is ever ready. Read that animating vision in *Ezek.* xxxvii. from the beginning, and do you call for the breath to come into your soul, and he will answer!

Do we feel our own weaknesses? Indeed, these are very many; but still there are gracious promises, which we may hide in our hearts and safely confide in. *In the day when I cried thou answerest me; and strengthenest me with strength in my soul*†. Let this be carefully laid up in your heart, and let it encourage you to do as David did. But, I shall add no more than that fine passage in Isaiah, sufficient to animate the most desponding creature living. *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he encreaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and grow weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles,*

* John xi. 25—26. † Psalm cxxxviii. 3.

*they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not be faint**. Confiding in a promise-keeping God, you may say, *I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me* †. Do you feel yourself all unclean? and does that discourage you? Attend unto the promises which were made, to *Circumcise your heart, to love him with all your heart* ‡. *To sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. To cleanse you from all filthiness of flesh and spirit: That he will cleanse the blood which he has not cleansed* §. *He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* ‖. *So that he has given to us exceeding great and precious promises; that through these we may be made partakers of the divine nature* ¶.

I can but just touch upon these important points: our time is gone. Upon the whole, what reason have we to bless God for his word? How justly have holy men in all ages, esteemed it an invaluable treasury. What a rich display of the mind of heaven. Let us take heed of all such as treat the book of God with contempt, and avoid their society, as we would such as have the plague.—— Whenever any one begins to despise the book of God, it is a sure sign they pay very little regard to the things of eternity. It is nothing less than a miracle, that the bible has been preserved in the

* Isa. xl. 28—30. † Phil. iv. 23. ‡ Deut. xxx. 6.
§ Joel iii. 21. ‖ 1 John i. 8. ¶ 2 Pet. i. 4.

manner it has; considering how eagerly its destruction has been sought both by the Pagans and the Papists; yet, like the bush in the wilderness, it has been unconsumed amidst the flames. Beware of such as speak lightly of the bible, and say that several of its writers were but men. It is true they were but men; but they were holy men of God, and spoke and wrote as the Spirit guided them.

Let us take heed to make a proper use of the bible; let it be much read in your closets, and in your families; bring your children to an early acquaintance with the holy book of God. Let your experience and practice be regulated by this divine standard; so that both may be so firm and strong, that no man can condemn or gainsay. Take heed all you hear be consistent with the plain, simple truth delivered in the bible, and as such give it a cordial reception; so that you may at all times adopt the words of the text, *Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

# SERMON IV.

## *The Sons of Darkness holding a Lamp to the Children of Light.*

Being the

## SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON,

DELIVERED IN THE NEW-MARKET,

*IN BIRMINGHAM.*

*I will provoke them to anger by a foolish nation.*——Deut. xxxii. 21.

*And the Lord commended the unjust Steward, because he had done wisely; for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.*—LUKE xvi. 8.

OUR Saviour's common method of preaching was, to use pertinent similies and comparisons, called parables; sometimes he rehearses certain circumstances, and draws useful improvement from the same. So we find him, in this chapter, relating the account of an unjust steward, who was accused to his Lord concerning his perfidious practices; and finding that he must be called to an account, and expelled from his office, begun to scheme the way of his future life. *What shall I do;* (says he) *dig I cannot; and as for begging, that I am ashamed*

*of.* However, being pretty expert in knavery, he adopts a very crafty, though a very unjust, method; and that was to diminish the sums of his Lord's debtors, that he might put the surplus into his own pocket. His Lord heard the part he had acted, and was so far from blaming him, that he commends him for acting his part so ingeniously, and contriving so dextrous a scheme. And our Lord assigns a reason for it, *For the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light.* Not that our Lord approved of his conduct, but takes hold of the circumstance to enforce things of a superior nature; namely, if the men of this world are so dextrous in contriving schemes of provision for the body, how ought this to stir up and quicken our activity in things of eternal concern. Hence we find fighting, running, wrestling, trading, all made use of to excite and quicken our tardy pace towards the attainment of everlasting blessings. All the professors of those several callings are cunning, active, eagerly bent upon gain, and know it is in vain to expect the end without the means. Hence our Lord tells us that, these poor drudges *Are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light.* Our Lord may be said to speak this to our shame; and if the lip of truth had not spoken it and daily experience proved the same, we should have been ready to have doubted the fact. Let us endeavour, my dear hearers, to improve this subject by considering.

I. Who are the children of this world?

II. Who are the children of light?

III. Wherein the former are wiser than the latter?.

I. Who are the children of this world?

1. This is a character which suits us all by nature. *For God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any who did understand and seek after God; but they are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable, so that there is none that doeth good; no not one: their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they know not. There is no fear of God before their eyes.* Dreadful description! but is it true? is this a general case! It is. The Holy Ghost is very particular. *There is none righteous; no, not one.* See Ps. xiv. and Rom. iii. Nay, if we be now the children of light, we were once children of wrath, even as others. *By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; for in Adam all died.* The fountain became polluted, and consequently all the streams. The root became corrupted, so did all the branches. This is a point that you all ought to be acquainted with; and such as attend the service of the established church, confess the same every time they come there. Too many, I am afraid, know not, neither care, much about the matter.

Then let me remind you of what you say when upon your knees. *We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone the things we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us.* Now all this is sad truth, whether you repeat the words in earnest or in jest. O darkness! darkness has covered the earth, and gross darkness the people who dwell therein. A sense of this compels me to cry aloud in this public manner, if, peradventure, light may break into the heart of some poor benighted souls, so that they may arise and follow Jesus.

2. The children of this world are such as see an excellency in the things of time and sense. One sees great charms in money, and lays out his whole soul to secure the shining idol; the making a good bargain is to him unspeakably preferable to the treasure hid in the field. The price of stocks, bills of exchange, the mysteries of commerce, are the darling topics which please and delight his dull low-minded soul. Dress and finery are things of great consequence with others. The newest fashion is more enquired after, than the fine linen of the saints. To strut about in gaudy attire, and become the dupe of every silly custom, and thus to flutter about like other hurtful and useless animals, seems to them the only end of life, and what their satisfaction centers in. Poor, vain, aweful creatures! how vain in life!

and is thy breath in the nostrils? and art thou a creature of a day? where will thy lodging-place be in a little time? Verily in the dust. A sumptuous monument is all that can distinguish betwixt thee and the most common dust. Theirs will rest as well under a grassy hillock, as thine under a marble monument. Nor will corruption, or worms, pay any respect to the pride of costly linen; but will as soon seize thy poor carcase, as that of the meanest beggar. These bold miners are no respectors of persons. And, after all, where will the spirit, the immortal soul have its dwelling? Either in Abraham's bosom, or in everlasting burning.—Honour and pomp are things of the greatest value in the eyes of others, and what their empty souls are always hungering after. All the honour from above is entirely forgotten, for the sake of being thought something amongst a few poor envious worms of the earth. Among the same class may we rank the man of appetite, who only lives to devour, and can speak upon nothing with so good a relish as excellent eating and drinking. How does such a pitiful being degrade himself beneath the degree of the lowest animals! All these we may rank among the gloomy generation of the children of this world.

3. The children of this world, see no form nor comeliness in Christ. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou once slain Lamb of God; *Thou art fairer than the children of men, grace is poured into thy lips.* The Father speaks from heaven and says, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Angels ascribe honour, glory, and power to him. Saints on earth, and saints in glory, make him the subject of all their praises. Every thing in nature, that is valuable, is collected to shew forth what he is. The sun, that cheers and warms the earth with his beams; the bright and morning star, the pearl of great price, the bread of life, the fountain of living water, the rose of Sharon, the lilly of the valley, &c. all the relative titles, as king, husband, father, brother, redeemer, friend, and lover; all these, though very significant, yet are but faint images, mere shadows, of what this dear Saviour is to all who trust in him. O, my most gracious God and King, how coldly do I mention thee! how flatly do I speak of thee!.

> " O for a thousand tongues to sing
> My dear Redeemer's praise;
> The glories of my God and King,
> The triumphs of his grace."

All this is but poor cold rant to a man of the world. His frozen soul remains as inflexible and unmelted as a mountain of ice before the feeble rays of a glow-worm. Christ is very little to him. Tell him of his death, the source of all our happiness, it is no more to him than the death of the Grand Signior; tell him of his blood, it is no more to him than that of a calf; tell him of his righteousness, it is no more to him than a girding of sackcloth; tell him of his great and precious promises, they are as unmeaning cyphers. O thou poor dull soul, what

dost thou mean to do in heaven? Would God I could reach thy flinty heart, so that thou mightest see thy need, thy absolute need of this dear Redeemer!—*To you that believe he is precious.*—Precious is his name, it is above every name. Precious are his promises, his merit, his spirit, his people, and ways. In a word, he is your *All in all.*

3. But lest in this public manner I should not be sufficiently understood, let it be well observed, every drunkard, swearer, lyar, sabbath breaker unclean person, extortioner, or thief, is, in the grossest sense, a man of this world. As also is every one who neglects the means of grace, who can lie down at night like a dog in his kennel, or rise like a beast in the morning, and not bow to his Maker. So is every one who sits down at his table like the ox to his fodder, or the lion to his prey, and never so much as asks the blessing of God upon his bounties. Every one who can drink, or sleep, or pleasure away the Lord's day, to the contempt of God and his blessed service. O, my poor dear fellow-sinners, how dismal is your situation! O that I could speak to you in tears of blood! How dark is your character! How wretched your state!

II. But it is time for me to consider a more pleasing character, and that is by enquiring who are the *Children of light.*

1. The very style of them is truly pleasing, and which I trust many of you bear. Now such are brought out of darkness, their native darkness, in which they are born and bred, and in which we all

abide till *God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shine into our hearts.* Then, indeed, we see ourselves in a lost, helpless condition, and are constrained to cry out, *Lord, save, or I perish.*— Such a one is now as intent upon every means of grace as he was remiss and careless before. A sense of the wrath of God hanging over his head, the vile and filthy condition his poor soul is in, will not suffer him to take any delight in the giddy world, nor can he take any satisfaction in sin. No, the time past is more than sufficient that he has served divers lusts and passions, and he sees it is high time to seek the Lord.

2. A child of light is one who believes in the Lord Jesus, to the saving of his soul. *Him hath God set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* This is the foundation which God has laid in Sion. This is that dear name which is above every name, and in which alone is salvation. Indeed I may say the whole turns upon this hinge, viz. our believing or not believing. If it is asked what shall we do that we may work the works of God? The answer is ready: *This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent.* If it is farther enquired, what shall we do to be saved? The answer is, *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.* By faith we are justified, by faith we are sanctified, by faith we obtain promises, by faith we run our christian race, by faith we stand stedfast in the ways of the Lord.

3. A child of light is one who *Is born again of incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever.* This is not a system of opinions, or any outward platform of religion; but the entire renewal of the soul in righteousness and true holiness. The will is happily subdued, and the will of God takes place. The affections are placed upon the proper object, while the heart becomes the divine habitation. *Behold, the tabernacle of God is now with men, and he will dwell with them;* yea, he will dwell in them. They *Put off as concerning the former conversation the old man, with his deeds, and are renewed in the spirit of their mind, yielding their members instruments of righteousness unto true holiness; labouring to keep the faith, in the unity of the spirit, and in the bond of peace.* Thus, *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.*

4. The children of light are such as are united to God. This our Lord teaches in the beautiful similitude of the vine and branches. As the branch is united to the vine, so are they united to their living head, and are deriving divine sap and nourishment from him, that they may bring forth fruit; and as the branch canno bring forth fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, no more can these, unless they abide in union with their Saviour. Again, this union is farther illustrated in the figure of the head and members of the body. *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bone.* It is

the head, *from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one; so also is Christ.* If therefore, ye are children of light, ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. Let such, therefore, be your sympathy one with another. *That if one member suffer, let all the members suffer with it; or if one member be honoured, let all the members rejoice with it.*

This union is set forth under the emblem of a building, of which Christ is the foundation. *Ye are God's building, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone.—To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, to offer up a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* So that all the children of the light can say, *Our fellowship is with the Father and the Son.*

5. Children of light have a sure and certain hope of a better country. *For if in this life alone they had hope in Christ, they would be of all men the most miserable.* But they can now say, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead; to an inheritance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, and which fadeth not away; which hope is as an anchor of the soul,*

*sure and stedfast, which enters into that within the veil whither the fore-runner is gone.* The hopes resulting from any thing in this world, are all like the giving up of the ghost; they will perish and bury their devotees in their ruins; all frail and feeble, just like the spider's web, which it spins out of its own bowels. Therefore, as the poet sings,

> "Lean not on earth, 'twill pierce thee to the heart,
> A broken reed at best, but oft a spear;
> On its sharp point peace bleeds, and hope expires."

But the hope, founded on faith in the blood of Christ, cannot be cut off; *But every man who hath this hope purifies himself, even as God is pure.*

6. The children of light are such as abstain from all known sin. *He that committeth sin is of the devil;* and therefore cannot be of God. *For this purpose the Son of God was manifest in the flesh, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* Destroy them! where? In the hearts of the children of men. For, undoubtedly, *His servants we are to whom we obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto life. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from this present evil world.* Yea, from all iniquity, and present us to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, *By giving up ourselves to his service, and by walking before him in holiness and righteousness all our days, so that at the last we may come to his eternal kingdom.* Did you hear me now? Have you understood what I have been talking about? I have not

been describing the princes of this world, but such as are kings and priests to God and the Lamb for ever; such as are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. But there is something which follows not much to their credit, viz. that *The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.* And this leads me to the

Third thing proposed. In the main thing, in the one thing needful, they are not; no, in this they are mere fools, but it is in *their generation*, in the management of worldly matters, we have in them an example worthy of imitation. Indeed Solomon sends the sluggard, yea the religious sluggard, to a more contemptible schoolmistress. *Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise.* But to the point.

1. The children of this world are very expert in finding out new schemes, and inventing what may be either useful or taking with the public. This town is an eminent proof of what I now assert.—What a variety of ingenious contrivances has it produced for twenty years past! nay, every year is still producing something which was not seen or known before. Now, what intenseness of thought has been necessary? How much sleep has it lost the projector? How long has he lay awake upon his pillow? Sometimes full of hopes that the fruit of his brain would soon be rewarded with profit or applause. Again, at other times, fear and anxiety have tortured his discontented breast when any of his schemes have failed. Here is a notable example

for the children of light. Why are they not as ingenious in finding out the holy art of living to God, and of conquering the grand enemy of God and man? Surely the understanding may be as useful in things divine, as in things temporal. Is there no as great a variety in the former, as in the latter? Why then are not all the noble powers employed in cultivating a more intimate acquaintance with the deep things of God? St. Paul complained of the Hebrews, that he had many things to speak concerning Christ, which he could not at that time speak, because *They were hard to be uttered, seeing*, says he, *ye are dull of hearing*. But that it might not be the case, he exhorts them to *Leave the principles of the doctrines of Christ, and go on unto perfection*. But too many grow wise in their own conceits, and think they have found out all that is to be found, and that prevents their knowing any thing more. The same apostle prayed that the Ephesians *Might comprehend with all saints, the length and breadth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge*.

2. The men of the world are exceeding diligent in executing the schemes which they have found out. No labour is too hard, no dangers too formidable. Night or day, or both, shall be employed, rather than miss their mark. They rise early, and take rest late, and eat the bread of carefulness.—Thus Alexander, at the age of thirty-three, had conquered, as he supposed, the whole world; but what dangers and difficulties did he endure? what

sleepless nights? nay, perhaps, sometimes did not lie down. Julius Cæsar, I think it is said, fought fifty pitched battles; and, for many years, was continually in the peril of his life. What extremities of heat and cold did he endure! what long and tedious marches! what wounds and pains must he have felt! and what anxiety and distress of mind! yea, often, what vexation and tribulation no one can tell. Now the point these two famous heroes had in view was, *honour;* that their names might be immortal among mortals. The same diligence we find in the men of letters; so that they have forgot to eat their bread; nor would they scarce suffer their candle to go out by night. It was said of the famous Archimedes, that, when the Romans took the city of Syracuse, he was so intent upon the adjusting some geometrical lines, that he knew not that the city was taken, until a soldier came into his apartment and killed him. The very same fervor we see in the man of business. See the merchant, or the capital tradesman, how eager? how smart? nay, he will put his own hands to the business, not afraid of dirting his ruffles or disadjusting the cock of his hat. Indeed you may smile, but it is truth. How does the farmer bestir himself in seed-time and harvest! Does he sleep in bed when he should be in the field! no such thing.—Now it is in vain to expect the end without the means. Here the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. O, how often are we found loitering, if not sleeping

on our journey? Hence we find need of such exhortations as these; *Awake thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee light. Let us run with patience the race set before us; looking to Jesus. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life. Let us not sleep as others do; but let us watch and be sober. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life. Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, but shall not be able. Be not weary in well doing, and in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not.* Indeed the sluggard longeth, but hath nothing; while the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. Thus, my dear hearers, the kingdom suffers violence, and the violent ones take it by force. Let us labour to enter into his rest, that we fail not through the same example of unbelief.

3. The children of this world are careful that they be not imposed upon. A tacit proof, by the way, of man's fallen nature, and the deceitfulness of his heart. This suspiciousness and diffidence we see in all, and all prudent care taken to prevent fraud or deception. Hence oaths, subscriptions, bonds, notes, &c. are all given for that purpose.—Nor is that the case only with people of letters; but even the most illiterate. Look at that honest farmer. He has got as much learning as to read his almanack, and to observe the aspects of weather; and when fairs are to be; there you may see him about bargaining for a horse. See how warily he

proceeds. He examines the animal on all sides; his mouth, his eyes, his legs and feet. If there is a blemish, he points it out, so that the price may be diminished. See that tradesman, he has just received an order, it comes from one he is not well acquainted with; he makes very strict enquiry what his property may be; not willing to hazard his substance into his hands, without a probability of receiving it in value again. How wary and jealous? how cautious and circumspect ought we to be, that in no wise we be over-reached by sin or satan? The grand enemy lies in the way to deceive and will leave no method untried, which hellish policy can devise. *Be not deceived; take heed that no one deceives himself.* Satan is called an *Old Serpent*, in reference to his cunning; we ought not to be ignorant of his wiles. How did he overreach our first parents by his subtlety? and if he thus set on fire the green tree, what will he not do in the dry? If a man take a long journey, and has much treasure about him, what care will he take to secure it? he will go armed, and, if he can, will fall into honest company whom he knows, and is glad of their assistance. And should not this be the case with the children of God? Do they not carry about the pearl of great price; Christ in them the hope of glory? Are they not travelling through a howling wilderness, where the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way? what need is there to be wary!—what need to have on the whole armour of God! what need to have all assistance which can possibly

be had! Be jealous, be jealous over yourselves with godly jealousy, and labour after a watchful spirit daily. Keep the prize daily in view, and give the most earnest heed to the things which you have heard, lest at any time you should let them slip.

4. The children of this world are exceeding diligent in correcting their errors. If they perceive that they have taken a false step, how anxious are they in rectifying the same? what vexation seizes their minds? how will they hurry and toil? all disquiet till they have regained their former station.—How will they reproach themselves for their want of foresight or circumspection? How will they upbraid themselves with their negligence or inactivity, and call themselves a thousand fools! Here they are examples to the children of light, and in this respect are often far wiser. Numerous are the errors which they are apt to slip into. How often have they found their hearts deceitful, and by trusting therein have found themselves fools? Too soon are they betrayed into peevishness, slothfulness, or discontent. How often busy in the things of time and sense, when the affections should have been placed upon things above? What need to make haste: so that if there has been a missing of the way, they may regain it? O my dear friends look upon yourselves as treading on forbidden, yea, upon inchanted ground, while thus wandering out of the way. Never be at rest while any thing doubtful abides in your soul, or any reason to sus-

pect that you are not in your way for eternal life. Cry out,

"O let my feet ne'er run astray,
Nor rove, nor seek, the crooked way."

Shall the men of the world be so anxious lest they lose a little money, or the favour of some friend, or a little credit or fame? What need to look to ourselves, that we lose not the things we have wrought but that we receive a full reward.

5. The children of this world are ready to take every advantage which may fall in their way. And, indeed, some are not very delicate herein; they will not spare taking the advantage of their neighbour's ignorance or necessity, for the purpose of enriching themselves. However, no man of business will let those advantages slip which are looked upon as lawful and honourable; though sometimes there may be some difficulty in the case. Herein they are truly examples to the children of light.—And how many opportunities does a kind providence put into our hands to increase our heavenly treasure? What is every gospel ordinance, but an opportunity of improving in the divine life? By the blessing of God, we have plenty of these. We have line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; so that it might be a light to our feet and a lantern to our path. If we are watchful we shall, like the industrious bee, suck honey from every flower, and bring it home to the

hive. Every ordinance is a feast, a banqueting-house, in which we may sit with great delight, and find his fruit sweet to our taste. Likewise every season of affliction affords us some improvement, seeing, *All things work together for good to such as love God.* The school is not pleasing, but profitable; since much patience and resignation to the will of heaven may be learned therein. By means of such instructors, the Lord crucifies his children to the world, and the world unto them. Hence the apostle says, *I reckon that the afflictions of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy thy word, said David. And is not prosperity a season of improvement which we ought not to slip? As adversity is a season to improve patience; so prosperity should be a time for the improvement of gratitude. To have the necessaries of life with some degree of affluence, is matter of great thankfulness, and should make thy soul cry out in sweet confusion, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me.* The alternate seasons of the year, the various produce thereof, are all matter of thankfulness, and, if duly improved, may, like so many streams, lead us to the great fountain of all true happiness. The being favoured with particular acquaintance, with the more wise and pious servants of the living God, is matter of thankfulness, and what may be improved to his glory.—David's delight was in the saints upon the earth,

and such as excelled in virtue. Many occurrences of divine providence, too numerous to particularize, ought to be attended to, and such as may prove of the greatest utility to the soul, which is fully determined in all things to know nothing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

6. The men of the world endure many hardships, losses, and crosses, in order to the accomplishing their designs; many of which cannot be accomplished without. The farmer must face many a bitter blast, and many a shower of rain, many a sultry day, and many a frosty night; or he might beg in harvest and have nothing. The merchant must endure long voyages, and tedious journeys; or he could never make his fortune. All your Alexanders and Cæsars have endured much fatigue, many sleepless nights; or they could never have attained their ends. And must the children of light start back at every little hardship or difficulty which may obstruct the way? No, it is written, *In the world ye shall have tribulation*, that, *Through much tribulation, we must enter the kingdom of God.*— Hence we are called upon to *Endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.* If thou wilt enter into life, deny thyself, take up thy cross. The divine life is compared to fighting, wrestling, running, and labouring for the meat which endureth to life everlasting. All which expressions denote labour and toil, difficulty and danger. Such is the warfare we are called to engage in. But, ah, how many grow faint and weary? Too much like the

seed on stony places; for a time they flourish; but when hardships and difficulties occur, they wither away. Fine summer shoots, but easily nipped in the winter. *But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.*

7. The men of the world do all to obtain a corruptible prize; like Jonah's gourd it perishes in a night. Indeed, what they have obtained with so much labour and toil, falls short of their expectation, and, like the sportsmen, all they enjoy is in the chace; if the poor animal escapes them, that is disappointment, and they are dissatisfied; and if they run it down, it puts an end to the diversion. Thus it is with all transitory things. Alexander cries because he has not another world to conquer; and Cæsar, when saluted *Imperator*, disgusted says, *Is this all?*——But the believer's inheritance is incorruptible; his crown is such as fadeth not away; as his happiness is full and complete, it is lasting as the days of eternity, coeval with the throne of God. Hence it is called an everlasting kingdom, everlasting life, a kingdom which cannot be shaken, a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; a better country, a heavenly one; wherefore God will not be ashamed to be called their God; for he has prepared for them a city, where the righteous shall shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father; where they shall hunger no more; neither thirst any more; for the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains

of water, and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes.

I have now dispatched what I chiefly intended; and I wish I have not trespassed upon your patience; and yet the serious attention which I see in most of your countenances, gives me to hope you are not weary. Suffer me to add a word of exhortation before I dismiss you. As I have described the children of this world, and the children of light, I hope you have all paid so much attention as to discover your own state. Are you then of the earth earthy? How highly necessary is it that you awake out of sleep? See what a poor portion thou art likely to have; *What shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* O then arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest. Awake, thou stupid wretch, cry mightily to God, if so be that God may think upon thee, so that thou perish not. See the heavens rolling away with a great noise! See the earth on fire! See the sun torn from the sky, and see the elements melt with fervent heat!

"See the stars from heaven falling,
Hark! on earth the dreadful cry;
Men on rocks and mountains calling,
While the frowning Judge draws nigh."

Where are thy vain pastimes now? where is thy carnal mirth? where is all thy show and empty pride? It is all gone; and only the bitter remem-

brance of it remains to sting thee. Where is thy cursed wealth, for which thou didst destroy thy soul? how does the very rust thereof rise up to thy eternal shame and confusion. O, that I could stir up thy poor dull soul to arise and trim its lamp, that this last scene in nature may be welcome to thee. *O that ye were wise, that ye understood this; and that ye would consider your latter end!* O ye, who are the children of my Father, who is in heaven, who are children of light, see how our Saviour provokes us to jealousy by a foolish people! Do these poor drudges use so much ingenuity in finding out, so much diligence in executing, so much care that they be not imposed upon, so careful to correct every false step, so ready to take every advantage, endure so many hardships, crosses, and trials, and all to gain a very precarious pittance, which, if they succeed, can but keep it a little while! What care, what diligence, ought we to use for the one thing needful! Lord, stir us up! Lord, awaken our drousy souls!

> "We, for whom God the Son came down,
> And labour'd for our good;
> How careless to secure that crown
> He purchas'd with his blood."

We know the emptiness of the world; we know the worth of a Saviour; we know the price, the inestimable price laid down for our salvation; we know the wretched state out of which the Lord hath in mercy called us. Let us not sleep, as do

others; but let us watch and be sober See the immortal prize set before you; run that ye may obtain. O, what has the precious, the adorable Jesus done and suffered for us? Rest not in any particular notions, no systems or platforms of religion No, gird up the loins of your minds, and lay aside every weight; so run that ye may obtain. My dear fellow-sinners, one and all, time is gone, but I am not willing to dismiss you till I can prevail with some of you to buy the pearl of great price; grant me this favour, and then I can gladly conclude. I cannot bear the thoughts of your damnation. Have patience with me a few moments longer; your souls are at stake; let us reason together a little. What profit is there in your blood, if you perish? If you could gain the whole world and lose your soul, what will you gain by the bargain? What pleasure is there in damnation? Can the most intolerable pain bring any pleasure to the for-ever lost sinner? Common sense shrinks at the very thoughts thereof. Is there any honour in lying under the infamy and disgrace of folly and sin for ever? Why then will ye die? Will you go to hell purely because the greatest numbers are going thitherward? What folly! What! go to hell for the sake of company! How will that very circumstance augment your misery? Why will you die? Is there no pleasure, no joy, no satisfaction in the ways of the Lord? This you have not yet tried; therefore cannot properly judge of the matter.—Perhaps the path is not quite so gloomy as you

imagine. However, make the trial; and if it does not answer your expectation, you can but at last throw it up. Unto you, therefore, O men, I call, and my voice is unto the sons of men. Let me lift up my voice like a trumpet; let me cry aloud and spare not. O ye poor prodigals, feeding upon the husks of worldly vanity; return to your Father's house; behold he waits to receive you; leave, leave your swinish delights and come away.—O ye poor earth-worms, who, like Esau, are selling your birth-rights to heaven for a morsel here below; come, dig for the hid treasure; the Lord counsels you to buy of him gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich. Take his advice; be at peace with him. O all ye unclean wretches, whose crimes will not bear the light, the sun blushes to behold you; the chaste eyes of angels turn from the abhorrent sight; turn to the fountain open for sin and uncleanness. Now is the time, the accepted time, to get your shame covered, so that it may not be called in question in the great day of the Lord. O ye poor self-righteous formalists, who are covered with the covering which is not of God's spirit, the time is coming when your fig-leaves will wither and drop off; the sparks of your own kindling shall die out; and *This shall ye have at God's hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.*—Yet he counsels you to buy white linen, even the righteousness which is by faith. The wedding garment is prepared for you; O put it on, that when the king comes to view his guests, he may

not find you speechless. Throw away your own filthy garments, as rotten rags, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ; that being found in him, not having your own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is by faith, both imputed and implanted, so may you attend the marriage of the Lamb, and sit down with him for ever. O all ye who trust in opinions, who parade yourselves upon your orthodoxy, and, like the papists, stigmatize all for heretics who may happen to differ from you in some circumstantials; who have substituted a notion, in the place of sound conversion; whether your opinion be right or wrong, your heart is not right. No, you have yet bitterness, envy, wrath, worldly-mindedness in you; yes, pride, fretfulness, and discontent. Yet, even to you I call in the name of Jesus; appropriate his merits, and have a saving application to your consciences; now arise and wash away your sins; throw off your stiff bigotry; put on charity which is the bond of perfectness; take care of treating sacred things with that levity of spirit, as though they were only trifling amusements. Remember whether those who may happen to differ from you be right or wrong; that sneer, banter, ridicule, hard names, scurrility, are all beneath the majesty of truth; aad that sacred things are to be treated with seriousness and solemnity. Besides, while you are unconverted, you cannot enter the kingdom of God.——O thou self-deluded sinner, while thou art warming thyself in the sparks of

thine own imagination, hear, O hear, and tremble at the word of the Lord. *Woe to them who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.* Truly, *If ye were blind ye would have no sin; but because ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth.* O what shall I say? I must deliver my own soul, and I am glad to see your serious attention; it shews good manners; and let me hope is a mark of your receiving the truth, though delivered in the plainest manner. This satisfaction I would have before we part, that some impression is made upon your minds. Truly it is far from been pleasing to expose myself to the sneer and ridicule of every fool, and stand up like a scare-crow; but let me be vile, if I can but persuade you to fly eternal shame and confusion. O, my ever dear Lord and master, let me find success in this the day of thy power; I want to cast the net on the right side of the ship; I want to find the way to the heart. Lord, I can but draw the bow at a venture, do thou direct the arrow between the joints of the harness; and let the pride and stoutness of man be brought down. So may the Lord alone be exalted in this day. O ye sabbath-breakers, drunkards, swearers, who swarm in our streets, unto you I call; awake, awake, and cry mightily to an offended majesty — Has God given us six days to make provision for frail bodies; and is the Lord's day to be devoted to idleness and sensuality? Why are gospel ordinances appointed, and places of divine worship ordained, if we are not to attend them? Why will ye

saunter away this blessed day in visiting, in sleeping, feasting, or at the alehouse? Awake thou godless, christless, graceless wretch; awake and cry mightily to him against whom thou hast sinned, if so be that thou perish not. But the sun is gone down, and the shadows of the evening are drawing a sable veil over the creation. Happy shall I be if any thing said may make a lasting impression upon any mind, so that you may arise and flee from the wrath to come Lord God lay to thy mighty hand, the work is worthy of thee, lay hold on these souls and save them, save them for thy mercy's sake.—*Amen.*

## SERMON V.

# *THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE-DOWN:*

Being the

## SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON,

Preached in the

*THURSDAY-MARKET,*

## IN THE CITY OF YORK,

*MAY* 6, 1781.

*Is all Well? Wherefore came this mad Fellow.*——2 Kings ix. 11.

*These that have turned the world upside-down, are come hither also.*—ACTS xvi. 6.

THE preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, and every thing appertaining to the same is generally treated with great contempt. *For the natural man*, the unchanged man, *receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned**. Hence it is that all such have been, and still are, enemies to the cross of Christ; *For the*

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

*carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God* *. This enmity has shewn itself in various forms; sometimes in rage and violence; sometimes by ridicule and scorn; sometimes by secret and sly insinuations, trying to make such as profess religion suspected of evil designs.

All these methods were practised against our Saviour, and the same we find verified against his followers.—However, God has frequently so overruled things for good, that even the wrath of man has praised him; so that the very terms of reproach have turned out solid truths.—For instance, the Pharisees, in contempt, called our Saviour, *A friend of publicans and sinners.*—Again, they said, *This man receiveth sinners*, which are now precious truths: So these singular words which I have just now read over, were spoken, partly by way of accusation against the servants of God, and partly by way of contempt, *These*, said they, *which have turned the world upside down, are come hither also.* Now they really declared a great truth, though in much ignorance: for this was the very design of the gospel, to turn the world upside down. And is it not the very design of the gospel, even now, to turn the world upside down? Does it not want such a turning? Do we not see the lives and practices of men want such a turning? And as *we* have been honoured with the same reflection, with those holy men of old, we will own the charge, only we

* Rom. viii. 7.

must beg leave to explain ourselves, and tell you our real meaning.—And suffer me to entreat your patience, and beg that none will make any disturbance, but that such as are disposed to hear, may hear peaceably. That the text may be rendered somewhat useful, I shall

I. Consider that the design of the gospel is to *Turn the world upside down.*

II. Shew you why we are come hither.

Lastly, Make some application.

I. I am to consider that the design of the gospel is, *To turn the world upside down.*

It is a great truth, asserted in the bible, and confirmed by woeful experience, that *Darkness has covered the earth, and gross darkness the people that dwell therein* * : Now, the design of the gospel is, *To open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God* †. By darkness we are to understand ignorance ; and, as the apostle says, *The times of ignorance God winked at* ‡. But what kind of ignorance does he mean ? He could not mean natural things, for it was a very enlightened age (in that respect) in which he lived; learning of all kinds was in its highest perfection, and learned men met with very great encouragement, especially in the time of Augustus, who being himself a man of letters, gave great encouragement to all who excelled in the same ; and yet that time is by the apostle reputed a season of

* Isa. lx. 7. † Acts xxvi. 18. ‡ xvii. 30.

ignorance. But what were they ignorant of? They were ignorant of themselves; they did not know *That they were poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked* *. They were ignorant of the *Only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent* †. They were ignorant of the nature of true religion; they knew nothing of the spiritual worship which that God, who is a spirit, requires from all who worship him ‡. And do we not see the same ignorance prevailing even now? Nay, does it not shamefully prevail in this ancient city? Now then, there is need of the same turning upside-down in this day, and in this city, that was necessary in the apostolic ages.—We have need that *God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, may shine into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ* §.

2. The design of the gospel is to turn men from death to life. As soon as man sinned he died; that is, his soul died a spiritual death, and in the same wretched state all his unhappy posterity came into the world, and are no more capable, of themselves, to perform any thing acceptable to God, than dead bodies are of performing the functions of living men. To this purpose the apostle speaks, *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in*

* Rev. iii. 18. † John xvii. 3.
‡ John iv. 24. § 2 Cor. iv. 6.

*sins, hath quickened us together with Christ* *. Now, then, the design of the gospel is to call men from this spiritual death, that they may be quickened by grace, and wholly made alive to God ; *That they may eat the flesh of Jesus, and drink his blood, that eternal life may be in them* †. The believer is passed from death unto life ; the unbeliever *Shall not see life, for the wrath of God abideth on him.* How can we run our christian race without life ? or how can we fight the good fight of faith if we have no life.

3. The design of the gospel is to turn men from rebellion to obedience.—That every soul of man, while unrenewed, is in a state of disobedience, I prove from your own confession, I mean such as attend and own the authority of the established church. Suffer me to remind you what you there say, *We have erred and strayed from thy ways, like lost sheep ; we have done those things we ought not to have done, and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done.* But I have greater authority than this, even God's word, *And you*, says the apostle, *that were some time alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through Christ* ‡. And should either of these witnesses be disputed, I mean the church of England and the scriptures, doth not daily experience prove the point ? Is not every curser and swearer a rebel against the King

* Eph. ii. 6—7. † John vi. 54, 55. ‡ Col. i. 21, 22.

of heaven? Is not every liar and drunkard, sabbath-breaker or unclean person in the same situation? For what is rebellion, but breaking the laws of the land? And what is rebellion against God, if breaking his laws be not, and flying in the face of his command? But let the gospel take place, and man's rebellion is at an end; he fears God, he honours the king, and all that are in authority.—He will attend unto the fifth command, and become a better man. The receiving the gospel will make better husbands, better subjects, and better neighbours; so that they will labour to fill up those relative stations in life to the praise and glory of God. This will do that which coercive laws and corporal punishments cannot do; it will make them act from principle, and fix that heavenly rule in their breasts, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, that do ye also.* Without this, a name or party signifies very little; for the greater his privileges are, the greater is his condemnation; for *He that knoweth his master's will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.*

4. The design of the gospel is to turn men from sin to holiness. I say sin, not barely such as may bring pain or shame upon us from our fellow-mortals, but whatever has a tendency to defile the soul.—The true convert is not satisfied with making the outside of the cup clean; but his prayer is, to be *Delivered from all blindness of heart; from pride, vain glory, and hypocrisy, and from all uncharitableness;* yea, *that the thoughts of his heart*

*may be cleansed by the inspiration of God's holy spirit, that he may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name.* St. Paul says, *Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof**. And the Lord says, *Be ye holy, for I am holy* †. Nothing which defiles can enter into the New Jerusalem; *For without holiness no man can see the Lord* ‡. And depend upon it, that same holy Lord who expelled sinning angels out of heaven, will never suffer sinning worms to come there. Besides, our Saviour *Gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works* §; *for none but the pure in heart can see God.* Now, let the blessed gospel of God our Saviour take place, and it will answer the desired end; and therefore we ought not to be ashamed of the gospel, *For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believe* ‖.

5. The design of the Gospel is to turn men from misery to happiness. Happiness is the desire of every human being. It is for this that all creation is, as it were, groaning and travailing in birth; but men have fancied it to be in several things in which it is not. Hence one is seeking it in money, and pants after the dull shadow with all his might; rises early, and takes rest late; is ever restless, and is just like the idiot who ran after the rainbow; for

* Rom. vi. 12. † 1 Pet. i. 16. ‡ Mat. v. 8.
§ Tit. ii. 14. ‖ Rom. i. 16.

though he ran ever so fast, still the rainbow left him behind: So it is with the man who is aiming to satisfy his empty soul with money. The very same may be said of that honour which one poor worm can receive from another: The same of dress, diversions, company, or any other earthly delight. All these are seeking the living among the dead.—Every created thing says, *Happiness is not in me.* What then is to make that spirit, which is the breath of the Almighty, happy? Verily, nothing but the Almighty himself, and the blessed gospel points the wanderer directly to him, and says,—*Look unto him and be saved all the ends of the earth.* Read over the viii. chap. of Proverbs, and you will find the very same doctrine delivered which I am offering to you. We are often bid to sing unto the Lord, and rejoice in the Lord; all which expressions plainly testify that there is true joy to be found in him. *He wipes the tears from off all faces, and will cause the rebuke of his people to cease**. As many of you as have been at the Cathedral may recollect it was observed, "the way for any one to be happy is to believe in Christ, who said, *Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.*" It was justly observed, "men are apt to run away from their troubles, and drive into worldly business, and do not come to Jesus, who alone can give them true comfort and happinnss." Our Saviour says, *In the world ye shall have tribulation,*

* Isa. xxv. 8.

*but in me ye shall have peace; be of good cheer, I have overcome the world* *.

Depend on it religion is so far from driving people mad, that it is the only thing which will ever bring them to their senses, and give them a peaceable and comfortable mind. When you dwell in Christ, and Christ in you, then you feel a peace which passeth all understanding; by which the mind is kept in the knowledge and love of God:— *For in his presence there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore* †. As for all happiness which arises from creature comforts, be they riches, pleasures, honour, beauty, or any thing else short of God, it will leave us behind in a very little time. The happiness which we want is, that which will not fly from us when sickness or pain shall overtake us; when old age shall shake us by the hand; when death shall make his formidable approach; when the pillars of the house shall shake and tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, and those that look out of the windows be darkened. We want a happiness which will stand the scrutiny of a judgment seat, and the terror of a flaming world: In a word, a happiness immortal as your soul, and immoveable as the throne of God.

6. The design of the gospel is to turn men from danger to safety. We are informed that, all having sinned, they are under the curse, and consequently

* John xvi. 33. † Ps. xvi. 11.

in danger of dropping into hell; and there is but one way of escaping, and that is by flying to Christ; for there is no other name given among men by which we can be saved from sin and misery here, or eternal damnation hereafter. The gospel holds forth this Saviour, saying, *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.* Suffer me to remind you of a few awful passages: *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God* *. *Upon the wicked will God rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup* †. *For Tophet is prepared of old, he hath made it large and deep; the pile thereof is fire and much wood: the breadth of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle the same* ‡. *For woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his own hands shall be given him* §. *Nay, such shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torments ascended up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night* ‖. *For their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them t hat know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power* ¶. *O consider this, ye that forget God, les*

* Psalm ix. 17. † Psalm xi. 6. ‡ Isa. xxx. 31.
§ Isa. iii. 11. ‖ Rev. xiv. 11—12. ¶ 2 Thes. i. 8—9.

*he tear you in pieces, and* there be *none to deliver* *. My dear fellow sinners, these are doleful subjects, and what a preacher of the gospel can take little pleasure in; but if we undertake to teach, we must be faithful; *For knowing the terrors of the Lord we must persuade men* †. As watchmen we must make a faithful report, so that you may be warned to fly from the wrath to come. We apprise you of your danger, that you may escape this condemnation, by flying to the only refuge, a crucified Saviour, in whom all fulness dwells, and then you are safe. Then let the heavens pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat; let the sun be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, yet, having fled to the appointed refuge, you are safe; then you may lift up your heads with unutterable joy, for the time of your complete redemption is come.—Now, I pray, what is there amiss in all this? Is it not the truth as it is in Jesus? In this manner do we labour to *turn the world upside down.*

II. But it is time for me to hasten to the second thing proposed, which is to shew some reasons why we come hither.

1. It is the express command of our Lord and master, who says, *Go out quickly, into the lanes and streets of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, the halt, and the blind.*—— Nay, he repeats the command, *Go out into the highways and*

* Ps. l. 22. † 2 Cor. v. 11.

*hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled**.

Now, I apprehend this passage must have a meaning; and sure I am, if we seek for some mystical meaning, we shall be in great danger of making nonsense of it. Besides, we have its literal meaning confirmed by our Saviour himself, who went out into the high-ways and hedges, and preached the gospel every where. He was far from being nice; for he, who was to die for ruined sinners, knew too well the value of them to let them perish for want of speaking to them in the open air; and his own precious blood has consecrated the whole earth, and rendered every place proper to preach the gospel in. But some will say, Are not places set apart for preaching in; and may not people resort thither and hear preaching? There are places, and people may resort thither; but is it not a melancholy truth, that there are more that stay away than go to any place of worship? For the sake of these poor wanderers we come out into the lanes and streets, and if we do not, who will? I know no law against it; and I think we have a very good precedent for it in the very chapter from whence the text is taken, ver. 17. St. Paul reasoned daily in the market with such as he met; and in ver. 22, he stood on Mars-hill, a very public place, and preached a sermon to them. If we look into the Proverbs we shall find in several

* Luke xiv. 21—23.

places, *Wisdom crying without; she utters her voice in the streets: She cried in the chief places of concourse.* Nay, *she standeth on the top of high places of the paths. She cried at the gates at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors.— Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is unto the sons of men**. Now, if all this is not sufficient proof for preaching in the streets, I will promise to preach no more in them.

2. We come to call you to repentance. This is the leading doctrine of the gospel, such as our Saviour preached, when he said, *Repent, and believe the gospel*†; and such as his servants preached, when they said, *Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord*‡.— And as all have sinned, all must repent, and this you all acknowledge, not only in the daily confession, mentioned before, but in that well-known collect, when you acknowledge that, *though you be tied and bound with the chain of your sins, that the pityfulness of his mercy may loose you.* But repentance is not a bare confession of sin, but there must be a forsaking of it, if ever you intend to find mercy. And, indeed, if there is not a forsaking of it, it is plain there is not much abhorrence of it; but the true penitent will leave his pleasing, his profitable, and his honourable sins.

3. Another reason why we come hither, is to

* Prov. i. 20, 21. viii. 2, 3, 4. † Mark i. 15. ‡ Acts iii. 19.

preach our dear Lord Jesus unto you. We declare he loved your never-dying souls, so as to clothe himself with our frail nature, and was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, that with his stripes we might be healed. Look over at your leisure the liii. chap. of Isaiah. He, by the blood of his cross, hath expiated all our guilt, satisfying his father's justice, taking away the curses of the law which were against us, taking them out of the way, nailing them to his cross; and came and preached peace to all them who were afar off. Behold, then, the astonishing love of God our Saviour, who looked and there was none to save; therefore his own arm brought salvation to lost sinners; *for he came to seek and save that which was lost.* He gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time; and by the grace of God tasted death for every man. He offered himself "a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

4. We come hither to exhort you to believe in this all-sufficient Saviour. *For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so is the Son of Man lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.—For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life**. Thus we find

* John iii. 14, 15, 16.

believing brought in twice together in the very same words. So when he gave his apostles their commission, it ran thus, *Go ye into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned**. But the grand question now arises, What is believing? I wish men were intent upon knowing what it is, seeing salvation or damnation are suspended thereupon. This important affair does not consist in being joined to any religious society, or receiving any set of religious tenets, much less in repeating o creeds.—How many thousands say, *I believe in God the Father Almighty*, &c. who live in open rebellion against God; who are drunkards, swearers, liars, sabbath-breakers, and live in every other abomination? Now, you are a sad believer if you are one of this wretched stamp. Remember, it is with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and as soon as he thus believes, he is *Justified, and has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*†. It is true, believing is differently expressed in the sacred writings. In the Old Testament it is frequently called trusting in the Lord. *Trust in the Lord and do good*‡. *Trust ye in the Lord for ever*§. *They that trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion that cannot be moved, but standeth fast for ever*‖. In the New Testament it is called believing in Christ,

* Mark xvi. 16. † Rom. v. 1. ‡ Ps. xxxvii. 3.
§ Isa, xxvi. 4. ‖ Ps. cxxv. 1.

looking to him, following of him, eating his flesh and drinking his blood, and such are said to have eternal life abiding within them. As the Holy Ghost is so redundant in expressions, it shews the importance of the thing, so that some of these may be the more easily understood.

5. We come hither to apprise both saints and sinners of satan's devices. Poor thoughtless mortals are pleasing themselves with divers vanities, and are jesting upon the brink of eternal ruin, while the grand foe is laughing them to scorn all the time; and pleased, if any thing can please a lost angel, at the sight of careless sinners rushing headlong to endless ruin. Now, we want to make you sensible of your danger, that you may escape it. If some daring ruffian, in this city, was determined upon your life, either by force or fraud, by night or by day, would you not be continually upon your guard against so dangerous a foe? Such is that grand adversary of whom I am warning you; he goes up and down continually seeking whom he may devour. He is in one place called a god; and that shews his amazing power: an old serpent; and that shews his amazing cunning: our adversary; and that shews we are to expect no quarter from him: a roaring lion*; and that shews his great savageness. He that cast down a third part of the stars† will not spare poor worms; for he is come down, having great wrath. As for real saints, he

* 1 Peter v. 8. † Rev. xii. 4.

spares them not, and that they know right well.—They find it needfull to watch and pray, lest they fall into temptation.

6. We come hither to encourage all in well-doing, and, as far as we can, to be helpers of their faith. We come to strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees; to say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not, behold your God will come with vengeance, yea, with a recompence he will come and save you. If there is a good desire in you, it is the work of his spirit, and let that encourage you steadily to look up to him who is able and willing to perfect that which he hath begun in you. Many are your enemies, within and without, but fear not; for greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. He hath said, *In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world**. We have reason to be thankful that we live in a land of peace and liberty, and that we can worship God as we please, and when and where we please: Nevertheless, there is a spirit of enmity in every carnal, unrenewed heart, which will manifest itself in various forms (as was before observed); sometimes by reproaches, bitter words, scoffing or deriding, hearing and propagating evil reports, lies and slanders. Never think of having the favour of God and man too; if the world caress and speak well of you, there is reason to fear you are not faithful to God.

* John xvi. 33.

Look through the New Testament, and you will find *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution* *. Let none of these things move you, for as your day is, so will your strength be; and though it be through the fire or water, yet God will bring you at length into the wealthy place. One hour's enjoyment of the New Jerusalem will obliterate all the pain or toil which you may have suffered for your Redeemer's sake here below; for he will wipe all your tears away, and the remembrance of past sufferings shall be no more.

7. Lastly, We come hither to leave the incorrigible without any excuse; because whether they will hear or forbear, they shall know, at the great day, a way of salvation has been declared to them. That very gospel which we preach, is sure to be the power of God, either of salvation or damnation, wherever it is declared: *Therefore take heed how ye hear. Beware lest that come upon you which is spoken in the Prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye will in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you* †. This is a very unpleasing thought to a generous mind, viz. to think of rising up as a preaching witness against any at the last day. But could I flatter myself that my plain testimony should be useful to any one soul, I should think myself amply rewarded for my labour. I know it has a contemptible appearance for a man

* 2 Tim. iii. 12. † Acts xiii. 40, 41.

to set up himself as a gazing-stock in this public manner; but be it so; it is nothing like the shame which my Saviour underwent when he was spit upon and rudely buffeted; when he was cruelly scourged and painfully crowned with thorns; when he carried his cross through the streets of Jerusalem, and at last was nailed to the tree.

See there his temples crown'd with thorns;
His bleeding hands extended wide;
His streaming feet transfix'd and torn;
The fountain gushing from his side.

O, can we stand upon our punctilios of honour, respect, or credit, when we see our incarnate God made a spectacle to devils, men, and angels? For my own part, I trust I should rejoice were I set in the stocks all the afternoon, could it save one soul. But, alas! should I shed my blood it would signify nothing; no, it is the blood, the precious blood of Jesus which hath atoned, and which alone can purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Such is the gospel, such is its powerful influence wherever it is received, thus to turn the world upside down. What think you now? What worse would this city be if all its inhabitants were thus turned?

The streets would then be full of praise,
Of Jesus' love, his gracious ways,
His mercy, and his name.

Then there would be no need of our coming forth in this public manner; no, all would be peace and harmony, and riot and discord would cease. But if the gospel has this effect where it is received, have you received it? Have you got that religion which will stand the shock of that awful messenger which rides on his pale horse *? Have you that religion which will stand when the artillery of heaven is discharged; when the magazines of fire and brimstone shall break forth and set the world on flames? Should this be the hour, which of you could clap your glad wings and say, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!* Well, that awful hour is swift on its approach; seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

To conclude: I am glad to see that decency of behaviour, and attention which the greatest part of you have shewn; it shews good sense and good manners, and let me hope it is a sign of an understanding and believing mind, so that you may receive the truth in the love thereof, and feel the gospel to be the power of God unto an endless life.

* Rev. vi. 8.

## SERMON VI.

# *THE DIVINITY OF THE SON OF GOD:*

Proved in

# A SERMON,

*Preached in the New-Chapel, in Norfolk-Street,*

## Sheffield,

*May* 24, 1784.

*Namque erit ille mihi semper Deus.*——Virgil.

*Who is over all, God blessed for evermore.*—ROM ix. 5

THAT important question was once asked,—"What think ye of Christ?" and it is to be hoped that such as have a real concern for their eternal welfare, have attentively considered the same: for verily it behoveth us to consider into whose hands we have committed our all, and in whom our hopes of immortality and everlasting happiness are placed.

If men, who have a sum of money to dispose of, are very careful into whose hands they commit the same, and will not adventure it till they have proper security, much more careful ought we to be re-

specting him whose hands we commit our immortal spirits; truly, who should be no inferior a Being than a *Faithful Creator*. *Trust in the Lord with all thy might*, is the language of inspiration; *for they that trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which can never be moved;* therefore we are called to *trust in the Living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe*. Now the great point I am at this time to prove is, whethe this *Saviour of all men* be the *Living God;* and therefore have made choice of a text which positively asserts that he is such, and the context points in precise terms, who the person is, viz. Christ, descended from Israel with regard to his human nature, but as touching his divine nature, *He is over all, God blessed for evermore*. This important point I now desire to set forth in as concise and clear a manner as possible, making use of such arguments and scripture proofs as appear to me unanswerable, and begging assistance from above, that nothing may be advanced but the pure truth.

First, I shall endeavour to prove our Saviour's Divinity.

Secondly, Make some improvement from what shall be advanced.

First; I am to prove our Saviour's Divinity.—Those names and ascriptions are given to Christ, which would be highly blasphemous to give to any created being of what rank and dignity soever it might be. It is well-known that the name Jehovah is claimed by the Supreme Being to himself alone,

and is deemed incommunicable, as the following passages clearly prove. Thus when the Almighty would impress awe and reverence upon the minds of the Israelites, he makes them many promises, and warns them by awful threatenings in case of disobedience; he says, *If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God* *. And how often does the important asseveration occur in the book of Leviticus? *I am the Lord* †, especially in the xxii. chap. and the three last verses are each of them closed with the solemn sound. Many instances of the like nature are found in the prophets, especially in the prophet Isaiah; thus when he is comforting the church, which was at that time in distress, with the promise of redemption, and setting at defiance all her opposers; he says, *I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images* ‡. And so tremendous was this name, that no sacrifice was appointed for the blasphemer, but he must die §;—*For the Lord would not hold him guiltless who took his name in vain.* And the Jews (fallen as they are) at this day, have such a veneration for this awful name, that they do not allow their children to pronounce it in common, not even in reading the Hebrew Bible, but have substituted another word

* Deut. xxviii. 58. † Levit. xxiv. 23.
‡ Isa. xlii. 8. § Deut. v. 11.

instead of it. Now this very name, of which so much has been said in the scripture, and in other good writers, is given to the Saviour of the world. *This is the name whereby he shall be called Jehovah* our righteousness* †. In the travels of the Israelites through the wilderness, we have an account of their murmuring against the Lord; but being made sensible of their sin, they say, *We have sinned against the Lord—pray unto the Lord that he may take away the serpents from us* ‡. Now, who was the Lord, or, according to the Hebrew, this Jehovah? the Apostle tells us it was Christ. *Neither let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents* §. From hence it evidently appears that Christ as touching his divine nature is Jehovah.

The name of God, again, as we find it in the New Testament, and for the most part in the Old, is applied to the Supreme Being. To quote the passages where it occurs in that connexion, would far exceed the limits of a sermon; and I apprehend it to be quite needless, seeing it abounds every where in the bible. Now the very same appellation is given to Christ. He is *The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace* ‖.—

* In every place in the Old Testament where the word Lord is found in Capitals, the Hebrew is *Jehovah*; and is never applied to any creature but to the Supreme Being only.

† Jer. xxiii. 6.
‡ Num. xxi. 7.
§ Cor. x. 9.
‖ Isa. ix. 6.

And when he is comforting his church, he addresses her in such animating language as this, *Fear thou not, for thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called.* Here we see the believer's husband and redeemer is *The God of the whole earth.* To the very same purpose we find Thomas speaking, after he had declared, *Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, &c. I will not believe:* Our gracious Lord, knowing both his words and his thoughts, condescended to him, and shewed him his hands, and bid him not be faithless but believing; Thomas exclaims in pleasing ecstacy, *My Lord and my God**. Now had Thomas been mistaken, in a matter of such consequence, our Saviour would surely have rectified it, and not left his well-meaning disciple in so gross a deception.

The Apostle Jude carries the matter still higher, even when an old disciple, and writing an inspired epistle, and I apprehend took time to deliberate, therein stiles him *The only wise God and Saviour*†. And it seems pretty clear to me that it was Christ which St. John meant, when he said, *This is the true God and eternal life*‡: therefore if the divine titles mean any thing, they must prove what the text asserts, viz. that *Christ is over all, God blessed for ever.* I might mention many other names, which properly belong to the Deity, and

* John xx. 25. † Jude i. 25. ‡ 1 John v. 20.

yet are given to the friend of sinners, such as, Eternal, Almighty, Omnipotent, Invisible, &c. but I wave them at present.

2. I prove his divinity from the works said to be done by him. In the first of Genesis, we are informed how the world was made, and who was the maker thereof; and the Psalmist referring to the same says, *He spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast**; and in another place he says, *The sea is his, and he made it, and his hands prepared the dry land†*. But of whom is all this spoken? undoubtedly of the Supreme Being.—Now this very work of creation is ascribed to a precious Christ, as is very clear from the following passages, and not as a work delegated to him from a superior, but as the prime worker; *Thy Maker is thy husband, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel‡*. *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made§*.—One cannot help taking notice how particular and express the Holy Ghost is, as if it were intended to cut off all cavil, and prevent mistake; *All things were made by him*; then he was not a creature of any order whatsoever, or he must have been created by some one himself. Likewise the redundancy of expression renders it more emphatical still; *and without him was not any thing made which was made*; so that nothing can be more precise and particular.

* Ps. xxxiii. 3.
† Ps. xxxv. 5.
‡ Isa. liv. 5.
§ John i. 3.

To the same effect, and more largely expressed, the apostle's words are, *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist**. If words can be more to the purpose, they must be those in the same epistle, *For in him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily* †.

Such is the testimony of holy men on earth, men who spake and wrote as the spirit gave them utterance. Let me once more summons a set of witnesses from the empyreal regions, and not of the inferior orders. I take the living creatures, and the four-and-twenty elders to be the highest rank of created beings that we have any information of, even in heaven; we are favoured with a particular description of these bright sons of the morning in Ezekiel ‡, and still more so in Revelation, and we find them all join in casting *Their crowns before him that liveth for ever and ever*, that is, before Christ, and saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive honour and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created* §. It would be mighty easy to swell this discourse with many more quotations upon this head, but I look upon these already produced quite sufficient.

* Col. i. 16, 17. † Col. ii. 9.
‡ Ezek. i. § Rev. iv. 8—11.

3. A third proof of our Saviour's divinity is, the worship and adoration which is both demanded and given him. We see in the sacred oracles how express the Almighty is with regard to this article in Ex. xx. 3—7. and in many other places, all which our Lord referred to when he said to satan, *It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve**. It would be endless to quote all the passages wherein the Almighty claims the worship of all in heaven and earth, and likewise the punishments inflicted upon idolaters; which I suppose will not be denied by any Arian; so that what I have here to prove is, that worship is demanded and given to the Son of God. I apprehend prayer and praise are too very essential branches in divine worship, let the modes of them be ever so different; these we shall find given to the Son in their full extent, The Divine Majesty is described in xcvii. Psalm with inimitable sublimity; and in the 7th verse it is said, *Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves in idols, worship him all ye gods*, which very place is by the apostle applied to Christ, with some little variation of phrase, saying, *And let all the Angels of God worship him*†.

Agreeable to this we find Daniel says, *I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before*

* Mat. iv. 10. † Heb. i. 6.

*him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed* *.— Here we find worship was to be given him by all people, nations and languages; and surely he must be the proper object of worship, otherwise it would be downright idolatry. And this is justly due from the essensial and inseparable union which subsists between the Father and Son. This our Lord asserts in his debate with the Jews, when they sought to kill him, because *He made himself equal with God* †. And so he did; nor did he think it any robbery ‡, or he would not have let them remain in so dreadful a mistake; but he was so far from contradicting them, that he confirms the great truth by asserting, *That all men should honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father* §. Here is a claim which no angel in heaven dares, or even desires to make; perhaps satan attempted something of the kind when he said, *I will be like the most high.* But then his place in heaven knew him no more; for he, and his unhappy associates, are *Reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day* ‖.— And should any creature, of what rank or order soever, make the same attempt, he would inevitably

* Dan. vii. 13, 14. † John v. 48. ‡ Phil. ii. 23.
§ John v. 23. ‖ Jude 6.

meet the same fate. But holy men, and holy angels have rejected that honour, when through ignorance it has been offered them. When Cornelius sent for Peter to hear the words of life from him, he was so transported at the sight of his apostolic guest, that *He fell down at his feet and worshipped him. But Peter*, (knowing that such homage belonged not to him) *took him up saying,—Stand up, I myself also am a man.* In like manner we find Paul and Barnabas at Lycaonia, acting the same becoming part when the multitude *Brought oxen and garlands*, according to their manner, *And would have done sacrifice with the people.* But these faithful servants of God would not be deified, and therefore *Rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying, Sirs, why do ye these things? we also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things which are therein, &c**. In like manner we find when the angel was shewing the apostle John the heavenly regions, he was even so overcome with the angelical glory, that he fell twice into the same mistake, and would have worshipped him, but he rejects it with abruptness, which shews him to have been in haste, aud as it is in the Greek, *See not*†, *I am thy fellow servant; worship God*‡. I am the more particular in these well-known circumstances, to make what follows appear in its

* Acts xiv. 14, 15. † Ορα μη. ‡ Rev. xix. 10.—xxii. 8.

proper light. For we find instances both of men and angels paying humble adoration to him that was slain; nor does he refuse it, nor are they blamed or it.

The poor Canaanitish woman begins her address to him in the language of divine worship: *Have mercy on me O Lord, thou son of David;* and as he seemed not to regard her, *She came and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me.* But did our Lord repulse her? did he reprove any mistake in her?—No: on the contrary, she is greatly commended by him saying, *O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt**. In like manner, after our omnipotent Lord had stilled the raging tempest, and had entered into the ship, and quieted the minds of the agitated disciples, it is said, *Then they that were in the ship, came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God*†. The next instance which I shall adduce, is the case of the man that was born blind. After he had vindicated the honour of his divine, though unknown benefactor, and on that account was expelled the synagogue, our Lord found him and said, *Dost thou believe in the Son of God? He answered, Who is he Lord, that I might believe in him? and Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe; and he worshipped him*‡.

The same divine homage was given to the Prince

* Matt. xv. 28. † Matt. xiv. 33. ‡ John ix. 35—38.

of Peace, after he had overcome the sharpness of death, and had burst the barriers of the tomb. A little before his passion he had assured his disciples that he would rise again and go before them into Galilee *, and according to that promise, *The eleven disciples went away unto Galilee into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him* †. Here was divine adoration; yet we do not find them blamed on that account, either by our Lord, or any one else. The very same is asserted by St. Luke, when our Lord paid them his last visit at Jerusalem. *He led them out as far as Bethany; and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy* ‡. Thus we find even after his bodily presence was removed, yet conscious of his divinity, they acknowledged it upon the very spot where he had lifted up his gracious hands and blessed them, and then he was received from their sight.

But if good men should be even mistaken in life, it highly becomes them in death to be certain that they should commit their souls into the hands of a faithful creator; and surely if this is the case with every good man, more especially it ought to be the case with every martyr; now this we find to have been the case with the first christian martyr: *They*

* John ix. 23. † John xxviii. 16, 17. ‡ Luke xxiv. 50, 51, 52.

*stoned Stephen, calling and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord lay not this sin to their charge**. Here is a martyr, in his last moments, committing his soul into the hands of his Saviour, and praying to the same gracious Redeemer for the pardon of his murderers. Now, surely, he unto whom a dying christian, a martyr, nay, the first christian martyr, commits his soul, in his last moments, must be God, or he goes out of the world an idolater.

4. A fourth proof of our Saviour's Divinity in his Omniscience. This is an attribute ascribed to the deity alone, and therefore cannot be justly ascribed to any creature, let their rank or dignity be ever so high. How awfully is this described in the cxxxix. Psalm? How does the man after God's own heart confess in the 11th and 12th verses, *If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee: but the night shineth as the day, the darkness and the light* are *both alike to* thee.

Man can only look at the outward appearance but it is the prerogative of God alone *to look at the heart*†. David, in his last charge to his son Solomon, makes this a capital argument to engage the heart of the young prince in the service of God.—*And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a peafect heart, and*

* Acts vii. 59, 60. † 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

*with a willing mind;* and mark the reason, *for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imagination of the thoughts* * As if he had said, Do not attempt to deceive infinite wisdom, for God is better acquainted with thy designs, desires, and thoughts, than thou art thyself, and nothing but sincerity will stand before him.

The same thought strikes him when he was making very liberal offerings towards the building of the temple. *I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness* †. As if he had said, let me not deceive myself with all this outward shew; for though it is astonishing in the eyes of man, yet thou, who seest the motives from whence I act, seeing thou triest the heart, art pleased alone with uprightness. In this also Jeremiah took refuge, while his enemies laboured to blacken him, and render him vile and abominable in the eyes of others; he cries out, *But, O Lord of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them* ‡, viz. his enemies, that their designs might be frustrated. Thus Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, among other acknowledgements, makes this remarkable one. *For thou, even thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men* §.— Thus we find the knowing of men's thoughts, the trying the heart and reins, is manifestly ascribed to

* 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. † 1 Chron. xxix. 17.
‡ Jer. xi. 20—30—12. § 1 Kings viii. 39.

the Deity alone; now it is evident that that very attribute is ascribed to Christ. Many instances of this appear. *Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all* men; *and needeth not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man* *. Thus when the Pharisees were plotting and caballing against him, it is said, *Jesus knew their thoughts* †. In like manner when they were proposing an ensnaring question to him, it is said, *Jesus*, Γνους πονηριαν αυτων ‡, *knowing their wickedness*, made his reply accordingly, convincing them that he was privy to the most latent thoughts of their hearts. Likewise, at a certain time, when his doctrine had not only given umbrage to the Jews, but even to several of his professed followers, insomuch that they were much staggered, he told them plainly, *But there are some of you that believe not.* And it is added, *For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were which believed not, and who should betray him* §. Thus we find omniscience is justly ascribed to the friend of sinners.

5. A fifth proof of the divinity of the Son of God, is his omnipotence; this is an attribute incontestably belonging to God alone; a power which can do every thing, making all things of nothing, or nothing of all things, and which no creature is able to resist; who speaks dead matter into living forms, and the living into dead matter. All oppo-

* John ii. 24, 25. † Matt. xii. 25.
‡ Matt. xxii. 18. § John vi. 64.

sition, whether from men or devils, must necessarily fall before him: the bible is full of this, so that to quote passages of this sort would be almost endless, and what no one who pretends to believe the bible will gainsay. What I am concerned to prove is, that the very same uncontrouable power over dead matter, or living creatures, is ascribed to that Saviour, who gave himself a ransom for all. Touching his creating power, his making all things, that has been already considered; so that from *The invisible things of him from the creation, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.*

What under this head is to be considered, is his irresistible power over devils and over the elements.

His power over satan was foretold soon after man's shameful fall, and is thought to be the first promise of a divine deliverer; when it was said, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and to which the apostle very probably alludes, when he tells us, that *He had spoiled principalities and powers, making an open shew of them:* and to whom St Paul applies the words of the Psalmist, *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.* But to attend to facts. It is probable there never was an age in which the devil triumphed more than in the age in which our Saviour was born, at least not since the general deluge. We read of no period in which he had pos-

session of so many miserable bodies; and soon after our Lord's entering upon his public employment, we find him begin to dislodge those infernal inhabitants. Nay, those satanical agents attempt no resistance, well knowing it would be in vain to resist omnipotence. Take one passage, in full, instead of many. *And in the synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst he came out of him, and hurt him not. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this? for with authority and power, he commandeth the unclean spirits and they come out* *. Nay, these exciles from heaven, and haters of God and man, could not so much as destroy a few swine without his permission. For in another place we find a cruel band of these tormentors of the human kind, having possession of one poor man, but Jesus, in pity to the miserable being, drives them thence, and they beseech him to suffer their remaining a little longer in the country, supposing they could do no more mischief than that of destroying the mean property of swine, very likely belonging to some worldlings in the neighbourhood †. In short, we find that whereso-

* Luke iv. 33—37. † Lev. ii. 4.

ever he assumes his great power, hell itself trembles at his word.

Another instance of his omnipotence is, his immediate power over the fiercest elements. When the three Israelitish heroes refused to fall down and worship the golden image, the incensed Monarch commanded the valiant youths to be cast into a dreadful fiery furnace; and to make sure work of it, he commanded the furnace to be heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated. Nevertheless, to his very great surprise, he perceives the fire has lost its force, and its very nature seems reversed; and why? because *The Son of God walks with them** being mindful of his promise † on this important occasion.

The stormy winds, and raging tempests, are equally obsequious to their heavenly Sovereign, and immediately fulfil his omnific word. See the several instances, *Matt.* viii. 24—26. *Mark* iv. 39. *Luke* viii. 24. *John* vi. 20. Well might the astonished disciples say, *What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?* Every disease, were it ever so malignant, yielded to his healing hand, or all-powerful word; yea, the hardy soldiers who came to apprehend him, were struck to the ground at his simple *I am;* and he could as easily have struck them dead, or into hell. Now if the trembling obedience of devils, the suspended rage of devouring flames, the stilling of stormy

* Dan. iii. 5. † Isa. xliii. 2.

seas, and furious tempests, and tremour of hardy and resolute men, are not instances of Almighty power, as well as creating all things out of nothing, it is hard to tell what is. Such is thy unlimited power, O! thou bleeding Prince of Peace!

6. A sixth proof of his Divinity is his Omnipresence; and indeed, not one of the least; this attribute is claimed by Jehovah alone. In directing the mode and manner of the tabernacle worship in the wilderness, the Lord, to encourage them, says, *In all places where I record my name, I will come to thee and I will bless thee* *. And to shew the ubiquity of the Almighty, Solomon says, *Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee · how much less this house which I have built* †? In consequence of this prerogative, it is, that God can fulfil his promise of being with his servants in all their dangers and distresses. So he spake to the Israelites ‡, and so he spake to Joshua, *As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee* §. Could any being who is not omnipresent, speak in such a stile as this? Yet farther. *I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of an humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones* ‖. Thus he speaks to his desponding church, *Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will*

* Exo. xx. 24. † 2 Chron. vi. 18. ‡ Josh. i. 5.
§ Deut. xxxi. ‖ Isa. lviii. 15.

*strengthen thee, yea I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee by the right hand of my righteousness* *. That we may see what stress the Almighty lays upon this attribute, he reasons, *Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord, do not I fill heaven and earth* †. Now let us see whether the blessed Jesus does not assume this very prerogative in its full extent. To encourage his servants in well-doing, and also to assemble themselves together in his name, he makes them this precious promise, *Where two or three are met in my name, there I am in the midst of them* ‡. But how can he fulfil this promise unless he is every where? and how can he be possessed of that attribute unless he is Jehovah? supposing two or three are gathered here in this place, the like number in London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Jerusalem, or where you please, if he spake the truth he is bound to fulfil his word; but that he can never do unless he fills all space, and that he cannot do unless he is in the most absolute sense of the word, *God*. Nay, after his resurrection he made in effect the same promise, and requires the same ability to fulfil it. *Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.*

Now that promise was not limited to the apostles only, as is plain from the term, *to the end of the world*; but must be extended to all his ministers,

* Isa. xli. 10. † Jer. xxiii. 24. ‡ Matt. xviii 20.

in every age and country. But if any one would wrangle through a stone wall, and say, but it did belong to the apostles only, what advantage would he gain? For it is very plain the apostles were dispersed abroad far and wide, and it is a doubt if two of them remained always together; so that still he must be omnipresent to be with them all; so that the opposers of this doctrine must take their choice either to believe the blessed Redeemer to be *Over all, God blessed for ever;* or to accuse the immaculate Lamb of God of being a liar.

7. Forgiving of sins is another incommunicable property in the Deity. I know this is not granted in the Church of Rome, and I wish the Church of England was free from this taint; but if all the churches in the world should usurp this prerogative of the Deity, yet *None can forgive sins but God alone.* He, and he alone, *Keepeth mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sins* *. He, and he only, can say, *I*, even *I* am *He which blotteth out thy transgressions, and will not remember thy sins* †. We do not find in scripture either man or angel attempting to do this.—Neither Moses, Samuel, Daniel, or any other servant of God. No, it was only the Lord who could *Forgive their iniquity, and remember their sins no more* ‡. Nor do we find any of the apostles attempting any thing of this kind, let the people be ever so penitent. Peter exhorts the *Jews to repent*

* Exod. xxxiv. 7. † Isa. xliii. 25. ‡ Jer. xxxi 34.

*and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out*: But never says "by the authority of God committed to me I absolve you," that vile usurpation was left for the latter days. And though there were very gross errors during the three first centuries, yet that abomination did not make its horrid appearance. But we find the friend of mankind, communicating his unspeakable mercy, and saying, *Son, thy sins be forgiven thee* *. Yea, he could say to a proud pharisee concerning a poor wretched sinner, *Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins which are many are forgiven her.* Likewise he repeats the charming sound to the poor offender, *Thy sins are forgiven thee* †. This is therefore a satisfactory proof that he is over all, God blessed for ever.

8. His inseparable, and yet inconceivable union with the Father, is another infallible proof of his Divinity. See the following passages. *I and my Father are one* ‡. *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works. Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me* §. Thus the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, that every knee might bow, and every tongue confess

* Mark ii. 5. † Luke vii. 47, 48.
‡ John x. 30. § John xiv. 9, 10, 11.

him to be Lord to the glory of the Father. It is true, this doctrine gave great offence to the Jews, insomuch that they took up stones to stone him for blasphemy, that being a man *Thou makest thyself to be God*, say they*. How does our Lord urge this claim in his last prayer? *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us—I in them and thou in me.*

9. The form of words used in baptism, is another clear proof of his divine nature, and which we have his command for; *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* †. When St. Paul was reproving the Corinthians for their partiality for particular persons or preachers, he asks, *Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? Nay, he had not baptized any save Crispus and Gaius*, and thanks God for it, lest any one should say, that he had baptized in his own name‡. So that being baptized into the name of Father, Son, and Spirit, shews the equality of the divine persons, otherwise why are they equally baptized into the name of each? To this I might add, that apostolical benediction with which congregations are usually dismissed, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us all;" this plainly shews the divine equality, and

* John v. 17—20 † Matt. ii. 12. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 14, 15.

consequently the divinity of the adorable Redeemer of the world.

10. The tenth and last proof of the Godhead of Christ which I shall bring, is, that of his being the Judge of all. The Psalmist cries out, *Judge me, O God, and plead my cause**. *The God, the mighty God, even Jehovah, that shall call to the heavens and the earth, that he may judge his people; Jehovah judgeth the people* †. It would almost be endless to quote passages of this sort, where the Almighty is spoken of and appealed unto, as the sole Judge of all. But who is this Jehovah, this mighty God, this Judge of all, who is to judge his saints, and the world in righteousness? To the law and the testimony, and there receive the answer. *The Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment to the Son: That all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father* ‡. *When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall divide them—Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world—Then shall he say to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,* &c. §. Here is the Judge, and

* Psalm xliii. 1. † Psalm vii. 8

‡ John v. 22, 23. § Matt. xxv. 31.

here is his irreversible sentence, which must stand firm for ever. For truly *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ* *; that every one may give an account of himself. *For the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give the crown of righteousness to all such as love his appearing* †. *I saw a great white throne, and him that sat thereon, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, every man according to his works* ‡. Such is the sublime and awful account of the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven; O! may we bow to his golden sceptre, that we may not feel his iron rod!

Now, my brethren, if the names, works, and worship of God: his attributes, pardoning sins, being baptized and blessed in his name, and his being Judge of quick and dead, do not prove him to be that Deity, *who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty*, I think we may call his very existence in question. But if all these prove him to be the very God of heaven and earth, then they prove what the text asserts, to wit, that *Christ Jesus is over all, God blessed for evermore.*

Our time is gone, and therefore I cannot detain

* 2 Cor. 10. † 2 Tim. iv. 8. ‡ Rev. xx. 11, 12.

you much longer, only I must drop a few hints by way of improvement.

1. What amazing condescension, pity, love and goodness, has the Lord of Glory shewn to vile sinners, in stooping to such circumstances of poverty, pain and distress? O pause! ponder! wonder and stand astonished at the amazing scene! see *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.* O! let his love, his dying love, constrain every soul here present, to love him again, and to cry out in sweet confusion, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits conferred upon me, a ruined sinner.*

A prince dying for his rebellious subjects, is an unheard of instance of goodness; and yet, that is nothing in comparison of this; seeing the creature bears no proportion to the quality of his Great Creator. Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad, yea, *Let the inhabitants of the rock sing;* for the Lord God Almighty, has redeemed sinful men with the price of his blood. This is the song of the holy inhabitants above, and which makes the heavenly arches ring, *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.* Sweet song, and sweet Saviour! O let every soul here learn it, and tune it for ever.

2. How inexcusable must every neglecter of this great salvation be? What could the Lord of glory have done for his vineyard, that he hath not done? The Lord God dies for sinful worms; and yet, O

astonishing folly! base ingratitude! they will not be reconciled to him, they will hearken to any thing, rather than the voice of the heavenly charmer. Trade, money-getting, or money-spending, in the most silly, empty, and vain manner possible, yet will be preferred to the pearl of great price.—Vain, sinful sports and pastimes, are eagerly sought after, often to the ruin of credit, substance, family; yea, soul and body for ever, rather than the pleasures bought at such an inestimable price, and which are at God's right-hand for evermore. O, ye betrayers, and crucifiers of the Son of God! Is it not enough that you must have all the thunders of Sinai, all the curses of God's book against you, and your own accumulated crimes, but must the cries of a dying Jesus, which you have despised, the blood and wounds which you have slighted, and all the unknown anguish which he endured; I say, must all this stare you in the face, at that awful day? Alas! my fellow sinners, what will dress and finery, shew and parade, pomp and honour, spacious rooms, luxurious tables, friends and pleasing companions avail you now! All like so many furies will encrease your anguish for ever.

3. Beware how any of you set up moral rectitude, human acquirements, rational endowments, and speculative refinements, instead of the atoning blood of Jesus, who is God and man! nay, let neither, orthodoxy, nor formality, usurp the place of Christ in you the hope of glory.

4. Let all who profess to believe the Divinity of Christ take heed they rest not in an empty notion of the doctrine, lest they be condemned out of their own mouths. Let them remember, that calling Lord, Lord, will not supply the place of sound conversion. Let them be found living fruitful branches of this living and fruitful vine; herein is he and *His Father glorified that we bring forth much fruit; so shall we be his disciples:* To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be equal and undivided honour, praise, and power in the church triumphant for evermore. *Amen.*

## SERMON VII.

# *A TIME FOR ALL THINGS:*

BEING

# A SERMON,

*DELIVERED*

## At Halifax,

Aug. 12, 1785.

Εξαγοραζομενοι τον καιρον.—*Eph.* v. 16.

*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.*—ECCLES. iii. 1.

AS the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, so the carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to him; despiseth his government, rejecteth all his counsel, and will have none of his reproof. This enmity manifests itself in various forms, and in general, by turning every blessing into a curse; rejecting the word of God, so that the same word which was intended to be the savour of life, proves the savour of death. Sometimes the word of truth is ridiculed, made the subject of dull and profane wit; or a variety of

objections are found against it, to invalidate the force and evidence which the painful truth will impart to such as follow their own imaginations.—Many attempts have been made to pervert the oracles of truth, in order to catch at some pretence to keep their unruly appetites in countenance.—Hence it is that some would justify unholy anger, because that passion is sometimes ascribed to God; and because our Saviour is said to have *Looked upon them with anger,** *being grieved with the hardness of their hearts;* and because St. Paul says, *Be ye angry and sin not*†; so even uncleanness and lies have sought a refuge in the scriptures of truth and purity. In like manner, vain, empty sports and pastimes have pleaded this chapter in their behalf, as if it were to contradict all the bible besides. For, talk to the vain sporters and pleasure-takers, the card-players, the horse racers, the frequenters of play-houses, and vain assemblies, the tavern hunters, and the ale-house sots, the vain talkers, and idle song singers; I say, speak to these, and warn them to flee from the wrath to come; to seek the Lord while he may be found, they will usually return you this impertinent answer, Solomon says, *There is a time for all things.* What drunkard, liar, thief or unclean wretch may not plead the same? My design is to attempt rescuing this passage out of the hands of scripture, as well as time-murderers. One thing more may be premised,

* Mark iii. 5. † Eph iv. 26.

and that is, the frame and structure of this book is of the dialogue kind, as is supposed, betwixt a believer and an infidel, though expressed in very dark forms of speech; so that to form a proper judgment of the meaning, we must consider the character of the speakers, which will be a key to what is said. In discoursing from the words, I shall endeavour,

First, To consider that there is a time or season for every lawful and necessary purpose.

Secondly, How we may make the best use of the same?

1. In time God made the world, and all things therein: he spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast; upon which, *The morning stars sang together, and the Sons of God shouted for joy.* He hath made every thing beautiful in its season, well calculated to answer the design of its creation, to wit, the honour of the Creator, and the comfort and happiness of the creature; so that the *Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work.* If we turn our grateful eyes to the earth, we see it arrayed in its rich attire, and filled with its Creator's bounty; so is the great and wide sea, in which are things creeping, both small and great, of all sorts innumerable, and all for the service of man. The alternate seasons of the year, and the various produce thereof, are replete with blessings to the needy sons of men; to supply our wants, and raise our gratitude to the great author of all our mercies.

2. Man, whom he hath set over the works of his hands, having failed, and involved all in ruin, God in the fulness of time undertook his redemption; assuming his nature, suffered in his stead, the just for the unjust, to bring him out of captivity. In consequence of this redemption, the spirit is given to help our infirmities; to enlighten our dark minds; to soften our hard hearts; to quicken our dead souls, and to guide us into all truth.

3. That gracious God gives us a time and a season for all the civil purposes of life: *a time to sow, and a time to reap; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to build up, and a time to pull down; a time to weep,* either for ourselves, or to shed the sympathetic tear with such as are in distress; *a time to rejoice,* either in God's mercies to us, or such as we are acquainted with; *a time to mourn* over our own follies and weakness, losses or crosses; *a time to dance,* a kind of a proverbial phrase, to shew joy and gladness, expressed by any outward sign which is lawful. In short, there is a time for labour and toil; for relaxation and repose; for familiar and useful conversation; for silence and retirement, for possessing or embracing any lawful enjoyment, and also for giving it up again; and, in a word, *a time to be born, and a time to die;* and for every lawful and honourable purpose during that short space, so that if that time is not used lawfully, we lose the valuable end for which it is committed to our trust, as a talent lent us for a small season.

4. But if there is a time and a season for every civil purpose, much more so for those things which are of an eternal nature. Repentance is a work of time, seeing there is no repentance in the grave whither thou goest. And though we cannot repent of ourselves, yet Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give that godly sorrow, that broken and contrite heart which is a sacrifice acceptable to God *. Now genuine repentance is not a little temporary sorrow, but a *Confessing and a forsaking of sin, that we may obtain mercy* †. All need this repentance; for all have sinned, and the Almighty calls every man to repent, and without it we must inevitably perish. I presume, the true penitent finds little time or inclination for either trifling mirth or the laughter of fools, which is like the crackling of thorns under a pot. The time past more than suffices to have wrought the will of the flesh, and his eager desire is to be renewed in the spirit of his mind.

5. Faith in the Lord Jesus is the business of time; and a season is granted to every one who hears, or may hear his name held forth for life and salvation. Without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that believeth not cannot see life, no, the wrath of God abideth on him. He that believeth, sets to his seal that God is ture; he that believeth not, makes God a liar; so horrible, so daring a thing is unbelief. A man is not born a believer,

* Psal. li. 17. † Prov. xv. 13.

nor is he made such by baptism; a mistake, which I fear deceives many, and which hath occasioned many to lay that ordinance aside, seeing so little true religion either in the baptizers, or in the baptized, that both the one and the other, and the thing itself, are too often abominable. Nor is joining any particular sect, in this age of parties, the faith of the gospel, though too much stress is laid upon that, as well as peculiar tenets. The short of the matter is, the poor sinner is sensible that he is a sinner, and as a sinner, he enquires how he may escape the damnation of hell. He is pointed to Jesus, bearing his sins and carrying his sorrows, and hearing the report, he cordially embraces the same, and with his heart he believeth unto righteousness; yea, rests his whole soul upon the atonement made by the blood of an incarnate God. This is the faith of God's elect, and which justifies the ungodly; unites the sinner to the Saviour, and gives ease to the bleeding conscience. Now we can neither hear nor read any thing of this faith in the world of spirits: Oh! no; every thing there is realized; what is now believed and hoped for, will then be fully enjoyed; every dark veil being rent from the top to the bottom, and all the glories of the kingdom of heaven unfolded for ever. Now is the time, the accepted time, to believe to full salvation; as such, delay not, put it not off for one moment, lest all should be lost for ever!

6. Holiness in all its branches is a qualification indispensably necessary; for without it there is no

entering the kingdom; and there is a time and a season for obtaining this unspeakable blessing. The greater part of you know that holiness does not consist in a few empty ceremonies; nor a set of sentiments, nor any outside formalities. O! no; it is the hidden man of the heart; it is the mind of Christ; the kingdom of God fixed within; and that kingdom is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. In this blessed composition, humility must take a leading cast; for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble; and though heaven be his throne, and the earth his footstool, yet to this man will he look that is *Poor, and of a contrite spirit, which trembleth at his word**. O yes! *Bleseed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom.* Love is another essential ingredient in this heavenly texture, and of such consequence, that there is neither holiness nor happiness without it. Very excellent things have been said of love. It is the first and great command; it is the end of the command out of a pure heart; it is the fulfilling of the law. It suffers long, and is kind; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not its own; hopeth all things; endureth all things, and never faileth. In a word, *God is love and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

But as we are in a world of fallen creatures, we always need patience; not only with our enemies,

* Isa. lxvi. 1.

and mankind in general, but even with our nearest and dearest friends, even with those of our own household. Equally necessary is resignation; for a wise and gracious God may, in the course of his providence, be pleased to try us with wholesome and necessary crosses, as he did several of his eminent servants in the days of old, and in every calamity it is our duty, nay it is our privilege to say, *Thy will be done. It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* Let your humility, love, patience and resignation flame out in a holy zeal for the honour of God, and the good of our fellow sinners. But let it be the pure flame of love, and sweetly tempered with judgment. Let there be nothing of that foaming rage, which has too often usurped the venerable name of zeal, to the utter destruction of all that were the objects of its displeasure. With these precautions let it flame out with unabating ardour, so shall it be a pure fragrance unto God, and like the cheering rays of the sun after refreshing rain. In the mean time, let not sincerity be wanting, seeing that gives due value to the whole, and renders it sterling grace in the sight of God and man. For take this out of the composition, and the whole is mere dross, base metal, and can never pass current in the commonwealth of genuine christianity. There was no *guile* in the mouth of Jesus, neither must there be any in his followers*. It was matter of rejoicing

* Rev. xiv. 5.

to the apostle, to wit, *The testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not by fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he had his conversation in the world**. Perhaps it was a jealousy from that quarter which made the Psalmist cry out, *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting* †.

7. Now if this light is within, it must and will blaze out, its fruits will appear, there will be times and seasons for the same. For the good man who *Delights himself in the law of the Lord, is like the tree planted by the rivers of water, which bringeth forth fruit in his season* ‡. The tree will be known by the fruit, and the fountain may be judged of by the stream. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; but the evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil; so that it is highly necessary that the tree should be made good before the fruit can be such; and please to observe, *What a man sows that shall he also reap*; for it will ever hold good, *that he which sows to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; and he that soweth to the spirit reap everlasting life* §.

8. Thus does the universal Lord and Judge of the world grant unto man, in this his state of pro-

* 2 Cor. i. 12. † Psalm cxxxix.
‡ Psalm i. 4. § 2 Gal. vi. 8.

bation and trial, a time and a season to every lawful and valuable purpose, for all the civil actions of life, and for such as are of a moral nature; so will he be just when he judgeth, and clear when he condemneth. But as man is not a mere machine, and as he is made a rational creature, and through the offering of Jesus on the cross, a liberty of chusing or refusing is granted him; he may, and too often does, abuse this precious part of his talent, so that in the time allotted him for labouring honestly, he may be stealing wickedly; and when he should be speaking the truth, he may be lying; and instead of being chaste, he or she may be impure; instead of doing the Lord's work, on the Lord's day, he may spend it in doing his own pleasure, doing his own works, speaking his own words, or thinking his own thoughts: Also, instead of reading the bible, he may be reading novels, romances, or the vile rubbish of the stage, that sink of infidelity; instead of being solid and serious, like a rational creature, he may be trifling and impertinent like a fool; in a word, instead of repentance there may be impenitence; instead of faith there may be God dishonouring unbelief; and instead of holiness, without which none shall see the Lord, there may remain sin and filth; and then this must they have at God's hands, viz. *To lie down in sorrow and anguish* *. Therefore let all the trifling, half-thinking wits take notice, that if they were answer-

* Isaiah l.

ing the end of their creation, they would find no time for trifling and dissipation, folly, levity and nonsense; and however merry they may make themselves with the words of Solomon, or the infidel whom he introduces, let them consider, and ponder it well, there is a time coming when he that is *filthy shall be filthy still*, and he which dies *unholy* must remain such for evermore*; so that when it is too late they may exclaim in unknow anguish, *the harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are not saved* †.

II. Seeing these things are so, it is high time to enquire how this time, this season, which is granted us for every good and valuable end, may be improved? How may we gather up all the precious fragments, so that nothing may be lost! *He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear*, and consider.

1. We are accountable to God for that precious talent which he hath committed to us, for such valuable ends as have been mentioned; ends worthy of a God, and necessary to be attended to by all his creatures. He is the divine law-giver and moral governor of the universe, and to him all are accountable; for he is sure to bring, not only things known and visible, but *every secret work into judgment, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* The longer, therefore, our space, and the greater our opportunities are, the greater is the account, seeing not a moment can pass without being surveyed by those eyes which are in every place *beholding the evil and the good* ‡.

* Rev. xxii. 11. † Jer. viii. 20. ‡ Prov. xv. 3.

2. Consider, how great and important the work which must be done in time is. Such a revolution must take place in the soul of man, as is called passing from death unto life, and being quickened, who before were dead in trespasses and sins; a being translated out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of God's dear Son. What clouds of darkness to be expelled from the understanding! What fetters of unbelief to be knocked off! What deadly rubbish of worldly-mindedness to be cleared away! A hard heart to be softened, and a carnal mind to be entirely subdued unto the will of God, and the soul made a habitation of God through the spirit, that it may be made a meet partaker of the inheritance of the saints in life. This life divine we are called daily to manifest, in spirit, in conversation; by the word of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left; watching all opportunities to do good to the souls and bodies of mankind, and so glorify God in our bodies and our spirits, which are his. Thus are we called to believe in and love the Lord, to fight and conquer in time, that we may be *more than canquerors through eternity**.

3. Consider the shortness of time. All the pleasure resulting from the things of this life, admitting they are innocent and lawful, yet they are but pleasures for a season; and no sooner do we begin to taste them, but they are gone, and leave us disconsolate

* Rom. viii. 37.

behind. The possession of health and wealth is but for a moment; the enjoyment of our friends, is like a guest which tarrieth but for a night. History gives us an amazing insight into this. How soon can we run over the annals of many generations? The loud clamour, noise and uproar of a few elevated worms, filling the world with mischief and calamities, how soon is it silenced? and millions there are in the world who never so much as heard their names. The glory of Babylon made a great figure in ancient history; her walls, her gates of brass, towers, palaces, temples and hanging gardens, so as to be called one of the seven wonders of the world; the work of mighty monarchs and conquering princes, assisted by all the wealth and cunning art in the world. Where is she now? What says the prophet? *Wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in* their *pleasant palaces: her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged**. Now though all this was some hundreds of years in fulfilling, yet to show how trivial ny space of time is, when all her splendor and magnificence has been described in the most pompous manner, it is said, *In one hour is she made desolate* †. Yes, so it will be said in a very short time of every thing here under the sun; all like rivers

* Rev. xviii. 19. † Isa. xiii. 21, 22.

hastening to the great ocean of eternity. *The angel which stands upon the earth and the sea, will lift up his hand, and swear by him that liveth for ever and ever,* time shall be no longer*. Now ye time-killers, ye trifiers of the world, ye witlings of our day, ye half-thinkers, what can ye say to all this? Is it true? Is it rational? Can you deny it? Suffer yourselves to think a little, as well as jest, droll, laugh, dance and despise both God and man.

4. The uncertainty of time is a very alarming consideration. We are certain of nothing herein, except the present moment, and indeed scarcely that. Hence every thing of importance is pressed upon us *now*. *To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For behold, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation. For as in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man.* Notwithstanding they were awfully warned, yet, being genuine *Free-thinkers, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, 'till the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not,* and indeed, cared not, *until the flood came and took them all away; so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man*†. In the same free-thinking, or rather unthinking state, we find the stupid inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah; they did eat and drink, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, quite careless and pitifully secure, promising themselves a long lease of sensual gratifi-

* Rev. x. 6. † Matt. xxiv. 37, 38.

cations, and especially on the fatal morning when the sun rose with his usual splendor; but no sooner was Lot escaped, *But it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all* *. In the same pleasing dream we find the rich fool solacing himself in his abundance, and singing a wretched requiem to his lusts, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for* many years; *take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry.* But what is the answer of God? *Thou fool! this night shall thy soul be required of thee* †. In this dreadful delusion how many are crying peace and safety when sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape; and, like *Belshazzar*, sunk in sensuality and dissipation, though *Weighed in the balance and found wanting* ‡. Let every soul here take that wise, that solemn advice, *Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.*

5. Be diligent then in every means of grace No end can be attained without the use of proper means. In common life, and among people of common understandings, we find this rule is properly attended unto. The husbandman well knows it is in vain to expect a crop in harvest, without cultivating his land; so in like manner does the tradesman, the soldier, the sailor, as well as the scholar. All these know the means are the proper way to the end. Nay, in many brutes there appears something of

* Gen. xix. Luke xvii. 28. † Luke xii. 13—20. ‡ Dan. v.

the same consistency, as if they had some end in view by several departments in which they act in life. So it must be in the christian avocation. As it is the duty of some men to preach, it is the duty of others to hear; and as the throne of grace is accessable, every one is called to draw near; and as the bible is before us, we are called to *Search the scriptures** and it is the felicity of all protestant countries to have the bible in their own tongue, so that the blessed volume is exposed to every one. Social prayer and christian conversation are great privileges, and in the days of old were acceptable to God, and profitable to mankind; *For they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard them, and said, they shall be mine, in that day when I make up my jewels.* Now a man may go through all these means, and be fruitless, because he may trust in them; but he cannot be fruitful if he neglect them; as he who tills his land may sometimes miss his end; but it is in vain for him to expect a crop who tills it not.

6. But, as of ourselves we can do nothing, there is continual need of that gracious spirit, whose office is to guide into all truth, and who is to help our infirmities with groanings unutterable; to strengthen us with might in the inner man; to be a constant comforter to weary pilgrims in this dark abode. What is all knowledge, or what are all resolutions, without this heavenly guest? All systems

* John v. 39.

of doctrines, be they ever so clear; all outward forms, be they ever so specious; all modes of church government, be they ever so apostolical, without this heavenly paraclete, are like a body without a soul; mere dead images, being wholly destitute of spirit and life.

In most national churches, what is called religion has assumed a parade and state utterly unknown to the apostolic ages; not only the formalities of different garments and habits, but in the pomp of creeds, articles and systems, too frequently enforced with no small tyranny; affecting something of a worldly kingdom, which he, who came in the form of a servant, utterly disclaimed. Nor is this the case with national churches *only*, but others also; as soon as they begin to lift up their heads a little, easily assume something of the same swelling pomp, as this nation can testify in different parts. Even in these the mystery of iniquity doth already begin to work, and if it were backed with human power, with national authority, I fear sweet liberty of conscience must soon expire. Power is a bewitching thing, and there are very few of the human race with whom it can be entrusted. O may our hearts be truly influenced with that spirit of *Wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, genile, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and withont hypocrisy.*

This would put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and would stop the mouths of our half-think-

ing infidels more than all the abstract reasoning in the world. Indeed the most acute form of words evaporates into empty air; but the spirit and mind of Jesus is like Mount Zion, which can never be moved, but standeth fast for ever. The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. It is the spiritual worshipper that is truly pleasing to God; for such alone can worship in spirit and truth.

Having now dispatched, what I apprehend to be the doctrine contained in the text; permit me to make a reflection or two from what has been said: If the great concerns of eternity, the everlasting welfare of body and soul depend upon the short and uncertain space of time; is there any time for vain amusements, empty, not to say, sinful recreations, and all the soul destroying vanities which the wit of man has invented to kill precious time, and to dishonour our maker and hasten our eternal ruin: O, no! the language of reason, of common sense, of the bible, and of God himself, is, *To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Why tarriest thou, arise, wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord. Seek the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Awake, therefore, thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee life.*

2. Did our blessed Lord give any such liberty of destroying time as some plead? Did he leave any such example in his life? And are we become wiser than he? or can we trace out a safer path than that in which he walked? Does his plan admit

of any improvement? Are not all his works complete? and were not his life and doctrine so too? The misfortune is, the generation of triflers, who murder and abuse the scriptures, pay very little attention to either the life or teaching of their incarnate maker; in fact, they say to the Almighty, *Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* But let such insulters of God know, that yet a little while and abused mercy will retort their own language upon themselves in awful majesty, more terrible than that which shook Mount Sinai, when he will speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure, saying, *Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

3. I look upon too circumstances in our land, as the very sinks of the present infidelity, to wit, the entertainment of the stage, and ungodly preachers. The former of these, taking off and mimicking every character, the sacred majesty of heaven and earth, has not been spared by those whom our laws justly call *vagrants.* If we look a little into history, we may easily observe a nation has been nearly settling to its dregs, when the vermin of the play-house have been encouraged to crawl about and swarm in such abundance as it does at present in England. The Greek and Roman histories are dreadful instances hereof. Their courage, success, conquests; their truth and justice, probity and uprightness, all like

the snuff of a dying taper, were expiring before the rubbish of the stage was so much encouraged.

In short, by that human insult, that devourer of time, and every thing which is serious and sacred, truth is turned into fiction, and fiction is made to pass for truth; yea the very truth of God is turned into a lie. Now it is truly lamentable that all this atheistical trumpery is so much encouraged from the highest character in the land to the lowest.—No wonder that infidelity overspreads the land like a destructive inundation.

But if the players have slain their thousands, unholy ministers have slain their tens of thousands; for there are many poor, obscure villages where the locusts of the theatre do not come; it does not suit them; people have neither time nor money; but in every parish, at least, there is what is called a church, and consequently a priest: but alas, how much worse would it be for the poor ignorant people if they had neither the one nor the other? Ignorant they are, and ignorant they could but be. As the matter is, they hear little to do them good, but see much to do them immense harm.

If the Rector, or Vicar, is a man of fortune, how does he dispose of himself? Does he spend his time and wealth in doing good, in seeking after the lost, in helping the weak and the needy? Is he eyes to them that are blind, and feet to them that are lame? Does the blessing of him that was ready to perish, come upon him, and does he cause the widow's

heart to sing for joy*. Is he studying to shew himself approved unto God, a workman that need not be ashamed? Is he instant in season and out of season, not counting his life dear to him so that he may but finish his course with joy? Does he travail in birth with his parishioners, till Christ is formed in them? Ah, no: What does he then? he engages a poor hireling to do duty, as it is called; that is, read prayers, marry, bury the dead, preach once in the week, and consecrate and distribute bread and wine. In the mean time he, who has the charge of many thousands, is associating with the first-rate gentlemen, being an ample partaker in their sins; he is with them among the hounds, at the tavern, the gaming table, the race-course, the playhouse, &c.—Mean-while he hears them swear, and I dare not say that he never swears himself; he keeps them company in their midnight revels, and consequently revels with them: Thus he watches over the flock for whom Christ died.

But what is the poor curate doing? Well, while his master is keeping the great sinners in countenance, he is doing the same am ong the poor rustics. He has neither fortune nor family to entitle him to the company of the esquire or the baronet; therefore he must be content to take up with the company at the Clerk's house, namely, the singers, the ringers, or the poor church-wardens. With these he is very jovial, hears them sing many a merry catch, laughs

* Job xxix,

heartily; at a late hour they make a shift to stagger home, and tumble into bed. Thus, the gospel is preached, and thus poor sinners are warned to flee from the wrath to come; or rather by these methods, and various others are hardened in their sins; in the mean time, at whose hands shall their blood be required? Doubtless at the watchman's. *Shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord? and shall not my soul be avenged on a nation.* Such a set of preachers, and such a set of hearers as have been described*—Thus, I say, these are the two great

* Some thought, at the time of hearing the sermon, that I was too severe upon the clergy, that many of the expressions were too strong. If there were none, or but a few which bore the description given, I should think so too; but alas! I fear it is too general a case. I highly esteem a genuine Minister of Christ, let his name or denomination be what it will; but as for those whose lives are such as are described, can any thing be too severe? The more sacred any man's character is, if his life is a disgrace to his profession, the more vile he is. If we consult the oracles of God, we shall find such men in a very awful situation, and their characters are drawn at full length in frightful colours. Take a few passages instead of many. *His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain from his quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink, and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant* *. The prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them†. A wonderful and horrible thing

* Isa. lvi. 10, 11, 12. † Jer. v. 13.

great inlets of the present infidelity. Nor do I mean only the ministers of the establishment, but of every other denomination, who live in the same manner; for, I fear, among many of the dissenters the case is not much better. We see among them a set of fine gentlemen, risen out of poor lads, who pay very little attention to the painful work of the ministry. If they run not to the same excesses of riot with those, it is sometimes for want of ability, or for fear of the displeasure of some in their flocks. Otherwise, we find many among them will engage among the fashionable amusements, such as cards, play-house, assemblies, and the like, places which gospel ministers have no business to frequent, seeing in so doing they are miserable examples to the flock.

is committed in the land. The prophets prophecy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means *. Look over the xxxiv. chap. of Ezekiel, and see what God says to the unholy ministers of that day. What says our Lord? *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits* †. It would be an easy matter to multiply quotations of this sort, all which abundantly justify any thing said in the sermon. Nor do I confine the censure to the clergy of the establishment though by far the most culpable, but to preachers of every denomination; if the charge falls upon any of the name of Methodist, I look upon them to be the most guilty of all men. In short, whoever answers the description which is given, let him take shame to himself, and amend before iniquity become his ruin.

* Jer. v. 30, 31. † Matt. vii. 15. 16.

Upon the whole, the end of our creation and redemption is, to glorify God upon earth, and to be ready whenever he shall call us hence, and for these valuable ends he hath granted us times and seasons. And sure I am, a nature so fallen; a world so crowded with difficulties; a set of infernal enemies so busy, so intent upon the eternal destruction of the human-race, will leave us no time for the foliles of age—O no!

"Be this my one great business here,
With serious industry and fear,
My future bliss to ensure:
Thine utmost counsel to fulfil,
And suffer all thy righteous will,
And to the end endure."

Can our calling and election be made too sure? Can our evidence for eternal life be made too clear? Can the Lamp of a believer shine too bright? Can he be too holy? or can he be too much like his crucified Lord? In a word, Can he have too much of heaven and happiness in his own soul? No, he connot. Who then would not run for such a prize? Who would not fight for such a crown? a crown of righteousness which fadeth not a way. A land of pure delight, where the inhabitants shall no more say, *I am sick*; where the Lamb leadeth them to fountains of living water, and God wipes all their tears away!

## SERMON VIII.

# *A BLOW AT THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL:*

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF A

# SERMON,

PREACHED AT LEEDS,

*Oct.* 9, 1786.

*Avaritia est summa idolatria, quæ creaturas in locum Dei collocat.*—Gerh. Meditat.

*For the love of money is the root of all evil.*
1 TIM. vi. 10.

THERE is not an evil to which our fallen nature is liable, or in danger of, but we are strongly guarded against in the Book of God: and those things which we are in the greatest danger of, we are most frequently, and in the strongest terms, cautioned against. For instance, what is human nature more prone to than idolatry? and how closely does God press the danger upon our minds? yea, has made an express command against it, and has given us some very awful instances of his just displeasure

inflicted upon idolaters; which you may see at large in the history of the Old Testament.

As the Almighty has shewn his just displeasure against idolatry, so has he given his testimony against pride, *for he knoweth the proud afar off*, and on that account expelled the aspiring angels out of heaven, and cast them into the deep, the place assigned for all the children of pride.

The same Just and Holy Being has given us to understand his just abhorrence of unbelief; and we have many instances of the perdition of unbelievers in this world, and their awful doom is expressly declared in the world to come; for the final *Unbeliever shall be damed; the unbeliever shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* Nay, as he makes God a liar, so he is condemned already.

Now as idolatry, pride, unbelief, are all daring and capital sins, and against which a holy, jealous God has shewn his just indignation; so covetousness, or, as it is expressed in the text, *The love of money*, is a compound of them all; yea, the father and begetter of them; for it is said to be *the root*, not of some, *but of all evil.* And what does God say concerning the professors of religion of old? read and tremble, Jer. viii. 10. *Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to those who shall inherit them:* Why will he do so? because *every one of them, from the least even unto the greatest, is given to covetousness, from the prophet even to the priest. For the sin of covetousness* God smote *Ephraim*, and delivered the whole Jewish nation into the hands of their enemies.

St. Paul calls it twice in one chapter, *filthy lucre*, and seems at a loss to stamp it with some epithet sufficiently vile and detestable.

Let me, therefore, try to drag out to light, this dishonourer of God, this murderer of souls, this first-born son of perdition; and I pray that every heart may be open to conviction, and make the impartial enquiry, Am I the man? and upon conviction, from this very moment put the evil far away. But as it is a sin which intrenches itself behind so many excuses, great care must be taken, or you will certainly over-look it. *The love of money is the root of all evil:* Not money itself, it is the useful instrument of commerce, and very helpful in society; it is the *love of it*, the mind being set upon it: there the disease lies.

Let me therefore impartially enquire.

What the *Love of Money* is:

And then, the Charge which is brought against it.

1. When the thoughts are frequent in wandering after the mammom of unrighteousness, it is plain, there is an inordinate desire of the same. The thoughts seem intended by that expression frequently used by our Lord, *the heart: Where your treasure is, there is your heart also.* If, therefore, your treasure is in heaven; if what you deem your chief good be there, the object of your wishes, then will your heart, that is, your thoughts, as naturally bend thither as the stream runs down the hill; and if any thing interrupts the current thereof, it will not run till it returns to its channel again. The Apostle ex-

presses the same thing by the term *affection*: *Set your affection on things above, not on the things of the earth;* and, certainly, whatsoever our affections may be placed upon, is the object of our love; and if the gaining money be that object, than have we the love of money in us, *which is the root of all evil.*

2. Another proof of the love of money is, when the desire is strong after it. As long as we are in the world, we must have something to do in it, and in a moderate degree there must be some thinking about it; there are few things can be transacted without thought; so, in like manner, there will be a moderate desire, which is lawful. Hence a man sows and tills his land, it is lawful for him to desire a crop; a man is in trade, it is lawful for him to desire a moderate degree of gain, which may be an adequate compensation for his time and trouble; but the desire I am militating against is, that mentioned in the context, *they that will be rich;* who art bent upon it, who are determined, come what will, that this shall be the mark they aim at; they will fall into divers temptations, and into the snare of the devil. This desire eats up the vitals of religion, and will not suffer the soul to thrive. We may call it, the consumption of the soul, and unless it is cured, death, eternal death, must inevitably ensue. Now, whatever the thoughts are desirous after, that is the subject we love to talk about; we naturally slide into it; it is the centre where we rest. Hence we find great numbers, who even pretend to something of religion, in whom it is easy to perceive

very little taste for spiritual conversation; they will give a dry assent and consent to what is said, but the tone of the voice, the accent, the attitude, plainly testify, it is not their beloved subject. But change the subject; let it turn upon trade, land, cattle, price of stocks, or the like, and you shall find the man is quite awake, and as brisk and lively as a bee. It is the very same in what he hears as what he speaks; let him hear ever so excellent a sermon; let the subject be ever so important, yet it has no charms for him, it does not make his heart glad; he can yawn and gape under it with the greatest indifference; and why? Why! because it is not the subject of his thoughts or desires, it is not the thing he wants; he loves the world, and that is the theme which will charm his ears, and touch his heart in the most sensible part. What satisfaction can such a man find in reading the bible, or any thing else which is of God, and Christ, and eternal life, when he feels so little desire about the matter? The dear Redeemer, his sufferings, blood, merit, spirit, ways, people, promises, threatenings, or commands, are all flat, insipid, and wholly tasteless.

O, what a wretched animal is a man of this stamp! How utterly useless? Yea, hateful in his day and generation? But more especially if he is a professor of religion: Then he carries the foul contagion with him wherever he goes; so that he does not go alone to hell, *with a lie in his right hand*, but draws others along with him.

3. It is plain, a man loves the world when he feels an

uncommon joy in gaining money. Then, perhaps, while the honey is falling, he is cheerful, and quite good humoured with every body about him, because what he delights in now encreases: herein he has his reward. He forms a thousand pleasing schemes, like the rich fool, and proposes some time to say, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, eat, drink, and be merry.*

We ought, undoubtedly, to be thankful to the Parent of Good, for all the blessings of this life, and if he does bless us in our basket and our store, cheerfully to acknowledge from whence our mercies flow, and to think, God has put this into my hand, not to make an idol of; not to be fuel to my lusts and passions, but that I may use thereof moderately myself, and communicate to the necessities of others, and herein glorify God.

4. It is a proof a man loves the world, when he feels much sorrow at losing any part of it. This may sometimes be the case from a kind providence, who permits losses and crosses for valuable ends, namely, to wean his affections from the world, to stir up his soul heaven-ward, and to let him see how exceeding empty every thing in the world is; now, if instead of knowing the rod, and him that hath appointed it, and saying, *Shall I receive good at the hands of the Lord, and shall I not receive evil?* I say, if instead of thus submitting himself to him who judges righteously, he grows peevish and fretful, and like that hasty man, 2 Kings, vi. 33. cries out, *This evil comes from the Lord; what should I*

*wait for the Lord any longer?* This surely marks him out a lover of money, and a miserable man. Or as their state is still more emphatically described, Isa. viii. 21. *They shall fret themselves, and curse their God and their King, and look upward. And they shall look into the earth; and behold, trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish.* The very picture of a worldly, carnal-hearted man, who is a little crossed in his designs in worldly things. See, how his countenance is fallen, he knits his brow and frowns, and is quite out of humour with every one. Poor earth-worm! how wretched is thy present situation! but how dismal the prospect hereafter

5. But a greater proof still of a worldly man is, when he is not willing to part with a small share of what God has so plentifully bestowed upon him. Let a case be ever so urgent, whether to help on the cause of religion, or to help the poor, yet, he finds out excuses, and all arguments are lost upon him. Perhaps he seems to have every branch of religion besides; is zealous for his party, talks much of faith and love, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and of assurance; is a great exclaimer against pride and fashions which are crept into the world Many of these miserable self-deceivers are to be met with. O, that God may rent the veil from their hearts, if such are hearing me this day! and may he let you see your naked heart! And what will Jesus say to you at the last day, read and tremble, thou base drudge. Matt. xxv. 41—46. *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil*

*and his angels. I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; a stranger, but ye took me not in, &c.* Compare the above with Isa. lviii. 7—11. and let it come home to thy worldly conscience. And, my dear hearers, let every one here present ask himself—Am I the man, the worldly man? O what need of light and impartiality herein, that no one here should overlook himself?

II. Let us now consider the charges brought in against it, and here we have many in one. It is the root of all evils, the original words being in the plural*. This is a charge that will take some time in fairly opening up, and therefore I entreat you to hear me patiently, and apply closely.

1. It is the root of idolatry, or rather it is idolatry itself. *The covetous man who is an idolater*, is a person we are forbid to keep company with. How frequently do we find the Lord guarding the people against idolatry? There are in fact two commands out of the ten made against it, and we find many awful instances of God's displeasure are against idolaters. Now what is an idol? Any thing which is put in the place of God, therefore he is an idolater, and as such cannot have eternal life abiding in him. He is then a direct, daring, professed enemy to the cross of Christ, and in that state has the wrath of God abiding on him. He flies in the face of the commands of God, he rejects the council of God, and pours contempt upon the dying prayer of Jesus.

* παντων των κακων.

*Father*, said he, *I will not that thou shouldest take them out of the world; but thou shouldest keep them from the evil of the world;* but this prayer, yea, the dying agonies of the Prince of Life, and all the riches of redeeming grace, are set at nought by that wretch who is a lover of the present world. Such an one may be said to "give up his interest in both worlds; he is starved in this, and damned in that which is to come."

2. A second charge which I bring in against this child of perdition, and that is, it hardens the heart. Let the famished stranger, fatherless, or widow come shivering with cold, some pinched with hunger, overwhelmed with distress; he can see the tears run down the emaciated cheeks of the widow; the naked limbs of the poor orphans; can hear a hundred moving entreaties, "For the sake of him who died for us, a little relief; pity this naked orphan, look upon a poor widow or stranger in distress:" No; they might as well address the stock of a tree; he feels nothing; nay, perhaps like a true *Nabal*, flies at them in a fury, 1 Sam. xxv. He is quite insensible to all calamaties, deaf to all cries, and perhaps cannot only see misery without feeling, but can add insult to woe, and upbraid the afflicted in their distress. Therefore tell him of the mourning widow, the fatherless, the stranger, the prisoner, it is all nothing, he sleeps in a whole skin; warms himself with the sparks of his own kindling; *But this shall he have at God's hand, he shall lie down in sorrow.* How is the barbarous cruelty of the covetous described by

Job, chap. xxiv. 7? Hear and tremble, thou earth-worm. *They cause the naked to lodge without cloathing, that they have no covering in the cold. They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rocks for want of a shelter. They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge from the poor. They cause him to go naked without cloathing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry.* Such is the horrid fruit of covetousness. Tell him of the low state of religion; it means nothing, what he prizes above heaven is secure, and all is well. O, what a wretched member of human society is such an one? and, like a swine, does no good while living; and it is well if he does any when he dies.

3. It blinds the understanding, and will not suffer its slave to have his eyes open. By its deceitful glass, he calls evil good, and good evil; puts bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; and hence he becomes wise in his own eyes, and prudent in his own sight. Isa. v. 20, 21. He sees no loveliness in Jesus, no charms in the promises; all these are to him vanity and vexation of spirit; a mere tasteless thing. The world, and the things of the world, are darling topics, to which he spreads a broad sail to catch every breeze. The sound of a good bargain to his dull ear, is a more pleasing echo than the sound of salvation, and the chink of money, than the words of Jesus. Nor does he see the snares of satan. The righteous foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself from it; but the wicked, the

fools, pass on and are punished. Therefore *The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools.*

4. It creates much confusion in the world, and therefore cannot come from God, or lead to him. Hence arise all the law-suits, discords, fightings, and disorders in the world. This, with a witness, divides a house against itself; the father against the son, and the son against the father. This separates the dearest friends, and sets every man's sword against his fellow, and breaks the closest ties of friendship. It fills the mind with many evil surmises, unjust jealousies, envy, discontent; and sets a man a hunting, like another *Nimrod*, for that which is not his own. Let a man read the histories of ages past, and look at what is daily presented before his eyes, and he will see the truth of all I am speaking.

5. It is the cause of all the knavery in the world. No man chooses to be a knave barely for the sake of being such, for any real pleasure in it, or any honour he apprehends in the matter; but there is worldly pelf at the bottom: Hence come all the juggling, gaming-schemes, lotteries, slight-of-hand, swearing and forswearing, which are daily practised in the world. And indeed men are generally apprized of the evil lurking in every man's breast. See a man in a fair, how wary he is! how he eyes the animal he has a mind of, throughout the piece. He asks the faults; perhaps is told with horrid oaths there are none; yet he cannot believe,

being, as it were, intuitively persuaded that he that swears will not stick at lying. And why dares he not send a child to the market? Because he knows that covetousness is in the market, and that knavery will be exercised, and he will be cheated.

6. It occasions apostacy. Hence says the apostle in the context, *They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evils; which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* Again, 2 Tim. iv. 10. *Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world.* See another dismal effect of covetousness in *Josh.* chap. vii. Perhaps this base-born temper has occasioned more apostates than all others put together! O, the bewitching charms attending this sin above all others! I will close this remark with that strong description of our Lord's. *He also that received seed among thorns, is he that heareth the word; and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choak the word, and he becometh unfruitful.* Matt. xiii. 22.

7. It has been very often the cause of deliberate murder; for as the covetous man is the tool of the devil, as much as a drunkard; he generally drives him on so, that many a man has been murdered in cool blood purely for the sake of what he might possess: the murderer had no particular antipathy against him; but finding it not possible to

come at his ends any other way, without his being detected, he has therefore made sure work of the matter this way. Hence the numerous murders which have been committed in house-breaking, have generally sprung from this base-born temper. In like manner the many murders committed upon the high-road have been from the same cursed principle; and in several countries, especially in France, I am told, it is the dire custom always to murder before they rob; so that we see the love of money banishes every humane temper, and sets at defiance the laws of both God and man.

Lastly, If it is the root of so many evils, we may fairly infer it is the cause of eternal damnation.—Such we are told in the context, *Fall into a temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. They err likewise from the faith*, not barely from the theory, but from the life and practice of faith. I think there is but one instance in the Book of God of any being sent empty away who came to our Saviour, which was the rich young man, *Mark* x. 22. He went away grieved at what our Lord had said to him, and why was he grieved? Why! because *He had great possessions.* Well, and what would a covetous man now say, if the same thing was proposed to him, viz. *Sell all that thou hast, and give it to the poor, and take up thy cross and follow me?* He would in like manner go away grieved; yea, and perhaps angry too.—Let any man who is sensible of the value of his

soul, but duly consider what our Lord says, *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* I say, let him consider that awful saying; and one would think it might cure him of the desire of being rich. Against this fearful evil, St. John is very particular, that none might think themselves out of danger, he addresses himself to the three different classes of believers; and, lest he should not be pointed enough, he repeats the matter over again, *I have written unto you, little children, young men and fathers,* and what is it he would enforce by this solemn preface? *Love not the world, nor the things of the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* 1 John ii. 15. Can any thing then be more peremptory! Is not such an one an heir of perdition? and if he die in that situation, he cannot enter into everlasting happiness? Hear what the wise Son of Syrach says, *There is not a more wicked thing than a covetous man; and nothing more detestable than he who loves money: Such a man setteth his own soul to sale; because while he liveth, he casteth away his bowels of compassion.*

Now, my dear friends, are these indictments just? Are they the thing? Do you see their force? Then you shall be jury upon the prisoner. Are you resolved that he shall die? Shall he be nailed to the cross? Are you determined to give him shelter no longer? Then let the king's officers take him forth, and let him not live an hour longer.—

Come, then, holy zeal, accompanied with thy heaven-born companion love, and take the sword of the spirit, and destroy this enemy to God and man immediately. Let him no longer deceive the religious nations: Let him no longer be sheltered under any excuse, however fair it may be. But to be deeply serious, and to speak plain, what need is there to be jealous over ourselves with godly jealousy? lest this base temper, or indeed any other, should steal our hearts away from him who died for us. Do your thoughts run much upon the perishable things of time and sense? Let conscience now act an honest part. Are your desires very brisk and eager for the same thing? Does a little gain give you much pleasure, and a little loss much pain? Above all, do you feel much reluctance in parting with a small part of what God has given you? Consider how much you fall short of the scribes and pharisees; many of these gave a fifth-part of their substance either to pious or charitable uses; but how many, called believers, neither give a fifth nor a fifteenth part of their substance in works of piety and mercy? Nay, do not they look upon every thing expended that way as entirely lost?

What need of being open to conviction in this affair? Let not the evil lie lurking unseen, unfelt by us. As I said before, it is a sin which is sheltered under so many fair excuses, and plausible pretenses, that we need the greatest impartiality lest it should be overlooked. Perhaps you say, "I do not want to cheat or defraud any one; I love up-

right and honest dealings." Observe, it is not cheating or defrauding which the text is speaking against, it is the love of money: you may gain it honestly, and yet love it; you may be a fair trader, and yet a mere earth-worm, a covetous man, who is a real idolater before God. Be watchful that this base temper does not steal upon you. Read frequently, and meditate upon such passages as speak expressly against it. *Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be over-charged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.*—Luke xxi. 34.

Frequently consider, the many awful examples mentioned in the scriptures; as our first parents coveting the forbidden fruit; the case of Achan, Judas, Demas, with many other instances.

Indeed, the most effectual antidote against the love of money, is the love of God. Pursue it with thy whole heart. Remember, he that seeketh silver, shall never be satisfied; but he who has the Lord for his portion, has chosen that good part which not only satisfies him, but shall never be taken away from him.

* Every thing which has been said of the pernicious effects of loving money is dreadfully realized in that infernal calling, the *Slave Trade*; a calling which for injustice and barbarity may challenge all the inventions of the bottomless pit besides. A call-

* What follows is an addition to the Sermon.

ing which violates every thing belonging to humanity, and leaves no trace of either justice or mercy among mankind. The very first step of this horrid traffic is fraught with every thing which is unjust, barbarous and cruel. For what right has any power upon earth to take my liberty from me, until by some transgression I have forfeited the same? Were it that the notorious pests among the blacks were sought out and carried into confinement it might be a tolerable excuse, and doing the country a kindness in riding it of such: but we find no such discrimination made; but let them be ever so useful it matters not, if by force or fraud they can be laid hold on away they must go. Delicate or robust, young or old, male or female, except they be such as they think will bring nothing in the market, otherwise the husband is torn away from the wife, or the wife from the husband; the parents from the children, or the children from the parents; in short, all ties of natural affection are made void by those christian *man-stealers*. Indeed our baptized infidels have not only drank deep into the root of all evil themselves, but they have enfused the dreadful influence into the African leaders too; for we are told that they go to war avowedly with no other design than that of taking as many slaves as they can, that they may make merchandise of them to the slave traders, because they feel the price of their blood is sweet unto them, a channel of lucre which they never would have thought of if the money-loving christians had not inducted them into the

bloody path——And that single mode of violence must be attended with very dreadful consequences; for liberty is dear to every one, and therefore no wonder that the party attacked will exert every effort, not only to preserve their lives and liberties, and that of all who are dear to them, but will also use every method to destroy or captivate their assailants. In these bloody conflicts what dreadful carnage must ensue! for by mutual provocations even avarice gives place to rage, so that murdering and dire desolation must ensue. Now if devils were let loose, visibly let loose, amongst mankind what could they do more? And what is the cause of all this satanical cruelty? The love of money—In time of war, and great scarcity of men with us, press-warrants are issued out to compel men into the army; but then their characters are generally marked out to be such as are a plague, a nuisance to their neighbourhood; vagabonds, who are too idle to work, and therefore steal, or such as have no visible way of procuring a livelihood; and yet this had been often looked upon as a kind of an oppression; but more especially when seamen have been constrained to serve in the men of war. Yet here is no comparison: For such men as are pressed either into the land or sea service, have had wages for their time and labour, and in a short time have been liberated again, and during their absence the parish hath been obliged to take care of their families. But this is far from being the case with the poor Negroes. They are torn away, either by

force or fraud, from every thing which is dear to them in the world, never to see them again (unless all in captivity should join them again) nor do they know that any one will care for either parents or children, and with this bitter reflection, never to be freed till death sets them at liberty—Such are the hellish effects of covetousness. Such are the branches from the root of all evil. We justly complain of the Algerines, those sea-robbers, who for ages have been a plague to all nations, taking all the ships which they could conquer, and carrying the crews into a barbarous captivity; hence they who have been brought up in scarlet, embrace dunghills, and obliged to submit to hard labour and rough treatment. And indeed it is astonishing that all the European powers do not combine to extermine those cruel banditti from the face of the earth. But how can they, while they themselves are holding fast the yoke of oppression from the like or worse bloody traffic? Many books have been written to expose this christian villany, and to unfold this mystery of complicated iniquity, which may in time answer the salutary end, and the blood of the slain which has long been crying may be avenged. At present many of our great ones are rioting upon the dreadful commerce till the parent of good shall break the jaws of the oppressor and pluck the spoil from their teeth; and the horrid morsel which they have devoured shall they vomit up again.

Can there be one evil under the sun which the

love of money has not been the promoter of? It has broke through all ties, natural, civil and religious; yet the great ones as well as the small have been charged with it; even courts as well as cottages have had the accursed thing in their tents. This is no new complaint. What does God say to Israel of old? *Thy silver is become dross, thy wine is mixed with water. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves, every one loveth gifts and follows after rewards; they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come before them**. And again, men of the same stamp complain against their maker, that he had not noticed their fastings and austerities, he answers, *Behold, in the day of your fast you find pleasure and exact all your labour*; that is, they made their poor servants fast, but exacted the full quantity of their labour—*Is not this the fast which I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, into thy house? When thou seeest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh*†.

Near the same time, was the complaint equally heavy, and to this effect, *That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man he uttereth*

* Isa. i. 22, 23. † Isa. xvii. 3—8.

*his mischievous desire; so they wrap it up.* Thus we see justice was bought and sold, so that gain would turn the balance any way. Nay so far did the mammon of unrighteousness influence that all confidence was lost; hence the prophet says. *Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the door of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.* And herein, and from the same base motive *The Son dishonoureth the father, and the daughter-in-law is against her mother, in law: a man's enemies shall be the men of his own houshold*.* O that this this cruel enemy to God and man might be abolished from every soul who names the name of Jesus! they cannot thrive while it has this baneful influence in the mind, their laying aside extravagant sins will avail little while this root of bitterness poisons every thing which is good, that is but exchanging one evil for a worse. O, weigh it well, let a sense of its malignity sink deep, very deep into the soul, that it may be abhored with all the powers of the inward soul, so may we dwell in God and God in us world without end. *Amen.*

* Micah viii. 3—7.

## SERMON IX.

# *THE GOOD SHEPHERD.*

A

# SERMON,

DELIVERED AT LEEDS,

*Sept.* 7, 1786.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD GIVETH HIS LIFE TO THE SHEEP.—*John* x. 11.

*I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*—JOHN x. 10.

THE many endearing names given to our Saviour in holy writ, are very expressive of his bounty, care and tenderness, to such as receive him.—— Hence he is called *Light; I am the light of the world.* Likewise he is called *Bread; I am the bread of life, the bread which came down from heaven.* Also he is called a *Sun*; *For the Lord is a sun. To you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness, arise with healing in his wings.* So here in this chapter, as in several parts of the Old Testament, we find him called by the simple appellation of a *Shepherd*; see *Psalm* xxiii. and *Ezek.*

xxxiv. A shepherd, in the days of old, seems to have been a very honourable vocation, and they were wont to have very great care and tenderness of their flocks. Under the same simple, yet expressive image, is set forth the care, pity, tenderness, watchfulness, and benignity of him who came to seek and save that which was lost. How tenderly is he drawn, under this character, by the evangelical prophet? *The Lord is a shepherd, he gathereth the lambs with his arm, he beareth them on his bosom and leadeth gently such as are with young.* Isaiah xl. 11. So in the context, *I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. The wolf cometh not but to kill and destroy, I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* Charming language! Worthy of our closest attention. May the Lord help me to open, and apply the text in a way and manner which may be useful to each of your souls! I shall endeavour by divine assistance,

I. To consider the dignity of the divine messenger; who says, *I am come.*

II. The important message; *That we might have life.*

III. The plenitude; *That we might have it more abundantly.*

He did not send an angel on this wonderful errand; the business was far too weighty and important; nor a legion of angels; that would have been an honour far, very far, from what we deserved; yet could not all the angels in heaven have sustained

the awful vengeance due to human crimes. O, no; *He looked, but there was none to save; he wondered, but there was none to uphold;* all declined the arduous task, knowing the burden was too heavy.—As Milton sings,

> "He ask'd, but all the heavenly choir stood mute;
> And silence was in heaven."

Finding all refuge fail, his own arm brought salvation. This shews,

1. Great love. *In his love, and in his pity he redeemed us, and the angel of his presence saved us. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have eternal life. So that in this was manifested the love of God to us, that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.* His love was entirely free: There was nothing in us to attract the divine favour. No form or comliness; no beauty in us that he should desire us. As it is said, of his own free-will he begat us; so, of his own free-will he loved us. O, love without end, and without measure grace! Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou shouldest visit him? He who created millions of creatures (perhaps millions of worlds) of the noblest frame and texture, angels who excel in strength and dignity; adoring seraphim, and knowing cherubim, orders and ranks of which we have no conception, and whose very presence has too dazzling a lustre for us even to behold; yet should fix his peculiar love

upon a poor sinful object, whose origin is dust, yea, so love it, as really to unite himself with it; assume its poor, frail, indigent nature, and be made in all things like unto it, sin only excepted. He, who spake and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast; before whose presence the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy; who meteth out the heavens with a span, who comprehends the dust of the earth, who weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance; who walketh upon the wings of the wind; be astonished, O, ye heavens, be astonished, O my dear fellow-sinners; *He takes his delights among the sons of men.*

2. *I am come that they might have life!* This shews us the most amazing humility. Should a prince go into the dungeon of some notorious rebel and talk familiarly with him, advise with him about his pardon, and offer to abide a prisoner for him; yea, and suffer shame and pain in his stead, it would be such an act of condescension as was never heard or read of, amongst poor mortals: But what parity is there betwixt the most dignified person under the sun, and the infinitely great Jehovah? But here we see the great humility of Jesus; he divests himself of all his dazzling glory, and appears a worm amongst worms; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

> "Wrapt in swathes the immortal stranger;
> Man with men we have seen lying in a manger."

He humbled himself; he came down from heaven;

he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many, are the surprising declarations of the word of truth. Behold him there, lifting up his two little hands in the manger! Hark, his infant cries! how piteous! how helpless! See, those eyes of flame, wrapt in an infant's slumber! lovely babe! wonderous child!—Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, goodwill towards man! See that poor dusty traveller, sat on a stone at Jacob's well! See his parched lips; see the streaks of sweat running down his face! O, my God, let me not seek my own ease, my own honor, while I see thee submitting to the lowest, meanest station in life. See that distressed man of sorrows, praying, agonizing, groaning, with strong cries and tears! O Lord, hell hears and trembles; and heaven looks down astonished: Only man, stupid man, takes no notice.—See, that lovely countenance indignantly spit upon, rudely buffetted, ridiculed, cruelly scorged, and unjustly sentenced to die! See his death attended with every aggravating circumstance of barbarity and cruelty! Hark the doleful accents, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!*

"O, Lamb of God, was ever pain,
Was ever love like thine!"

Bow down my pride; lie in the dust mine honor, while I see my gracious God and King stooping down to the gloomy recesses of the grave. O, well

might he say *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls.*

3. *I am come!* This shews amazing pity. Well might the prophet say, *In his love and in his pity he redeemed them.* Pity has misery for its object, and is a most blessed temper of the soul, and argues a greatness of soul far surpassing all the famed achievments of the most renowned heroes. The heart which bleeds over human calamities, is that which shews a true sublimity of soul, which all the pomp and parade of man can never attain unto.—How have instances of generous compassion struck and melted my hard heart, and made mine eyes like fountains? But all we can find or read of amongst poor worms of the earth, are but faint emanations of his pity, whose heart is made of tenderness, and whose bowels melt with love. He saw us, poor wanderers, torn and lost, and bleeding to death, and no eye pittied us to do us good; but he being touched with the softest sympathy, ran to our relief. O, our case was truly desperate! No seraph, no angel, durst undertake the case of poor, fallen, ruined rebels! A victim was wanting; but the blood of bulls and goats, only availed to the purifying of the flesh, in a ceremonial way; but it is the blood of Jesus alone, which makes the true atonement for the soul. This he did not spare; this he freely parted with. This, this is the true fountain, the living fountain to wash a spotted soul from all its pollution, and to make it white as snow.—O, yes,

"It runs divinely clear,
A fountain deep and wide;
'Twas opened with a soldier's spear,
In my Redeemer's side."

O, my Jesus, my loving, bleeding Saviour, let a large degree of the same love and tenderness be transfused into my heart, and into all who hear me at this hour.

4. This coming of the true shepherd of Israel, implies great patience. The insults offered to his Divine Majesty, were of so provoking, so irritating a nature, that he might have poured out the vials of his righteous indignation, and have sunk the rebel-race into the bottomless-pit. What scenes of barbarity, injustice, lothesome impurities, lies and deceit; horrid blasphemies, scorn and contempt are daily perpetrated, and have been from the beginning, before the eyes of his purity! What is all history, but one continual scene of murder, plunder, cruelty, deceit, pride, guile, with every abomination which can either be thought of, or named. Many of which, chaste ears could not endure to hear, nor tender hearts stand the direful relation? I have often thought if the most patient man, mere man, that ever lived, had the government of the world upon his hands, and saw all the abominations which omniscience beholds, he would in a moment loose the pillars thereof, and annihilate it at once. But Jesus came to save it from ruin; came to bring it back to God; to restore the divine habitation; came to raise it from its ruins, and to repair its

breaches ; in a word, he came that *We might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly.*

5. This shews his infinite goodness to poor lost man. His goodness is often sung in lively accents by the royal singer of Israel, as also by many other inspired saints ; and a variety of instances are marked out as true images, which are intended to raise grateful sensations in the minds of such as are the objects of his goodness ; and indeed creation and providence abound with such instances as all the wisdom of angels can never fully investigate, nor the tongues of men and angels set forth. But as the sun out-shines the mid-night stars, so does redemption all the rest. Redemption ! it was creation more sublime ! O, it was the labour, the bleeding, dying labour of the skies, yea, of the God of heaven and earth. Goodness does not seem to be so much the designation of any one attribute, as a happy assemblage of them all put together : a bright constellation of all the gracious properties of the Deity, shining forth in countless rays, or falling down in showers of rich blessings on every side ; but all in one great cluster meet in that adorable person, whom we stile the Saviour of the world.— Indeed he is the very basis upon which the whole fabric of goodness rests, and in him all fulness dwells, a fulness for every ruined sinner.

II. Having considered the glorious messenger a little. I am now to consider the message itself, which is life, *I am come that they might have life.* This, by the way, shews that we were dead ; for if

it were not so, he could not be said to come *That we might have life.* He might have said, "I am come that ye might have health, or the blessings of life." But he does not say so; but, *I am come that they might have life.*

1. He is come to reconcile the offended Deity, and the whole race of sinners. Hence it is said, *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them;* and to every one who believes, to him is committed the word of reconciliation. There was an awful partition drawn between sinful man and his Divine Maker. The infinite purity of his Divine Majesty could not, in any wise, be united to the sinner, without the interposition of a mediator; and his justice, that holy attribute, which stands engaged for the honour of all the rest, lifted up the glittering sword, and threatened eternal ruin to the offender. But now, God in our nature, the good shepherd, steped forth, and freely laid down his life for his sheep. He breaks down the middle wall of partition, and so makes peace by the blood of the cross. Now, poor sinner, thou *Mayest enter into the holiest with boldness, by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he hath consecrated for thee through the vail, that is to say, his flesh.* Heb. x. 19, 20. Glorious peace-maker! Well mayest thou be called the Prince of Peace, who came that we might have life and peace. Well might angels sing, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men.* While the Lamb that was slain is in the midst

of the throne, we may come boldly thereunto, and obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need. O, come, my dear fellow-sinners, come speedily, ask fervently, O, believe, and peace will flow into your souls.

2. In order that we might have life, he came to repeal the law of condemnation, that the law of the spirit of life might make us free from the law of sin and death. The giving of the law was not intended to convey life unto us: O, no; it was the ministration of condemnation, and by it no sinner could ever be justified. It was given to shew us a little of that awful majesty against which we have sinned. It was given to shew what we ought to be. It was that the offence might abound, and thereby our doom revealed, so that from that quarter there is no remission of sins, no peace, no life no way for a lost sinner ever to be admitted into the divine favour: No; nothing but a fearful looking for of judgement, and fiery indignation from the Lord. There is no repentance, no forgiveness, though it should be sought ever so carefully with tears. But now Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believes. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, he himself being made a curse for us, yea, the very curse which hung upon the tree.*

"The deadly writing now I see
Nail'd with thy body on the tree;
Torn with the nails which pierc'd thy hands,
Th' old covenant no longer stands."

3. He came to enlighten the dark understanding. For this end he is called in the scripture. *The Sun of Righteousness; the bright and morning star; the day-spring from on high; the light of the world; the true light, which lighteneth every man which cometh into the world.* Poor man is not only groping in the dark for happiness; but also his back is turned upon the desired blessing, and he neither sees his real disease, nor does he see his true remedy. He sees no beauty in the precious promises of the gospel, nor does he see any thing awful in the threatenings; he knows not whither he goes, because darkness hath blinded his eyes. But hark, O, hark! what the Redeemer says. *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty such as are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.* Luke iv. 18, 19. Glad tidings! Welcome sound! O, thou poor beggar, sitting by the way side, who art pressed and rebuked by the multitude of thy sins, doubts and fears, cry out, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me; Lord, let mine eyes be opened, that I may see the world's emptiness, and my dear Saviour's fullness, yea, that I may see him the fairest amongst ten thousand, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. Now sin appears exceeding sinful, and holiness exceeding amiable Now the ways of true wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her

paths are peace. Now the soul sees the noisome pit, the miry clay, from whence his feet are pluckt, and that blessed rock upon which they are placed.

4. He comes to enliven the soul. Hence he is stiled. *The resurrection and the life. The Prince of life. The life of men. The quickening spirit. The living vine.* All which names are very significant, very expressive and full of meaning, considering the great Redeemer in his mediatorial capacity. Life is so essentially necessary to true religion, that the latter cannot be without the former. The truest system, the exactest regularity of conduct, and every other thing, however creditable in the eyes of men, are but dead forms, only like painted fruit upon a dead tree. Like a lamp without oil, so are all externals without life. As a body without a soul, such is religion without divine life. It is the main spring in the heavenly machine, and that which puts every wheel in proper motion. What a dark, cold, dead world must this be without the warming, chearing beams of the sun? As the sun is the light, so is he the life of the world. Now as a world without a sun would be nothing but a dead lump, a heavy mass of confused and useless matter; so is that soul which has not this divine quickener within. He cannot grow, he cannot run, he cannot fight the battles of the Lord; he cannot eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; he cannot rejoice, nor be truely happy. O, thou second Adam! thou quickener divine, dart one glance, one enlivening ray now in o every heart before thee, so that it may be said to each,—

*When Christ who is your life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

5. He came to purify the soul. It was not only dark and dead, but alas, the abomination of desolation stood in that which should be the holy place. That which should be the holy abode, is become the habitation of devils, and the cage of unclean birds. The lovely throne of the Redeemer is overthrown, and all over polluted, nor can he take any satisfaction or delight there. Instead of love, peace, gentleness, humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering, sincerity and truth; alas, alas, here is nothing to be seen but hatred, rage and anger; pride and self-sufficiency; malignity and deceit; lust and every cursed temper. And how can this infernal-rubbish be cast out? The stains are so deep, and the defilment so loathsome, that verily though thou shouldest wash thyself with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity would cleave to thee. Now, *Without holines no man can see the Lord;* and whatsoever defiles, can in no wise enter into heaven. What then shall be done in this case? Verily Jesus says, *If I wash thee not thou hast no part in me.* Here we see a fountain open for sin and uncleanness. Glory be to his blessed name, he loved the church, and gave himself for her, that he might wash her with water by the word, and present her to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing—then may the believer sing,

"What tho' all I am is sin,
Sin cannot break my peace;
Here is blood to wash me clean
From all unrighteousness:
This shall wash me white as snow;
On this for all things I confide.
Only Jesus will I know,
And Jesus crucified."

The bride of the Lamb must be like the king's daughter, all glorious within, so that when all collected together, they may sing. *To him who loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory for ever.*

6. He came that he might comfort the poor soul. Sin having brought death into the world, and all our woe, hath in like manner planted tears upon our cheeks, and fixed sorrows in all hearts. How thin is the partition, and how short is the space betwixt the most transporting temporary enjoyments and the most exquisite sorrow in their last and final ruin? The poor hungry soul, ever craving after that which it has not, is continually going to the broken cisterns of wordly enjoyments; and though it has met with nothing but one continued disappointment, yet it renews the vain, the fruitless attempt, but all to no purpose; the bleeding anguish is still unassuaged, its wounds are still gaping, unmolified, unbound and a restless discontent still takes place. But here is the true balm of Gilead, here is the true Physician, who heals the broken in heart, and bindeth up all their

wounds. The leaves of this tree of life are for the healing of the nations. He can say. *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* Here, thou restless wanderer, here is thy sure defence. Here is the balm of thy poor restless spirit. Rest thou in the Lord, wait patiently for him; so shalt thou find real consolation.

7. As he came that we might be thus holy and happy, so he came that he might dwell in us. This is confirmed from what is said in the prophets. *I will dwell in you*, says Jehovah. Again. *If any man will do the will of my Father, him will my Father honour, and my Father and I will come to him, and make our abode with him.* The apostle makes the highest degree of happiness to consist in having, *Christ in us the hope of glory.* It is true, one might here take up the inquiry with the Royal Adorer; *But will God indeed dwell with man?* Yes he will; for *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with man, and he will dwell in him, and God himself will be with him and be his God.* Glorious condescension! most stupendous benignity! That he who fills immensity will vouchsafe to make his humble residence in poor dust and ashes! Happy you cannot be if this divine guest is not in you, and miserable you cannot be while he sways his peaceful sceptre in your hearts. Behold then ye mourning tribes, the Lord whom ye seek will suddenly come to his temple, that he may be your almighty support, and inseperable companion.

8. He is come that he might protect and defend

his divine purchase, and see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. He knows there are many wolves of prey, many thieves and robbers, who are daily laying in wait to devour, and will leave no method untried to allure or force from the path of life. and as it is a material part of a shepherd's employment to defend and watch over his flock, so we find Jesus fulfilling his office; he stands up for their defence and protection, and has promised that such shall never perish, nor shall any pluck them out of his hands. His church is the lilly which is among the thorns; like the flaming bush in the wilderness; but while Jehovah is in the midst it cannot be consumed. As the Psalmist says, *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, he maketh me to lie down in green pastures beside the still waters; yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet will I fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me* Thus, they who trust in the Lord, are like Mount Sion, which cannot be moved.

III. The plentitude is what we are now to consider. *That we might have life more abundantly.* Here seems a tacit reference to the state of man before his fall? he had wisdom, life and happiness, and that was lost, being forfeited through disobedience; but from that source nothing can be expected, and all springs of hope being cut off, Christ, the Second-Adam, the Lord from heaven, came that we might have life, and that we have it more abundantly than if man had not sinned: that is, that we might abound

in every divine blessing, so that the breach is amply repaired.

1. That we might abound in divine wisdom: not the wisdom which puffeth up, but that which truly humbles; seeing the man knows more of himself, his own ignorance, weakness and depravity, and learns to have less confidence in himself. Solomon says, *He that trusteth his own heart is a fool*; but he who has this divine wisdom trusts in the Lord, and happy is he. He glories, only, in the cross of the Lord Jesus, and is determined to know nothing save Christ, and him crucified. He knows more of the emptiness of the present world, and is sensible that all in it is vanity and vexation of spirit, and was never designed to be the portion of an immortal spirit, a soul redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. He labours and toils in it, and such he must while in the land of his captivity; but it is his cross; it is not his felicity, not his joy, not the one thing needful, so that he is enabled to say, *The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.*

"The world can no refreshment give,
Shall I its deadly draughts receive.
Scoop'd from the hellish lake,
Nay, but I turn to the pure flood
Which issues from the throne of God,
And living waters take."

By the same light he sees more into the devices of Satan. It does not appear that our first parents were so sensible of this malignant foe, which was one

cause of their being taken captive by him at his will; but now, through him who is the light of life, we can mark out the lurking places of the artful fiend, and, through mercy divine, can avoid them. Through the same all-cheering ray, we are enabled to see more into the nature of our redemption, the amazing wonders of grace, manifested in our incarnate God and King. Here is every attribute sprinkled with the blood of the cross, and shines with an inconceiveable lustre; sends forth a fragrance, a heavenly fragrance, far more excellent than all the delicious spices of *Arabia*. Great, unspeakbly great, is the mystery of godliness; our God being manifest in the flesh: so great that angels desire to look into it. Wonders, stupendous wonders, of grace, environ the astonished soul, rush on her from the bleeding cross, and enclose her the prisoner of amaze; yea, they make her cry out, O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom, and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out! This clearly shews what is the believer's privilege and duty, viz. To rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in every thing to give thanks.

2. As through the coming of Jesus we may abound in wisdom, yea go on from light to light, till our path, like the shining light, shines more and more to the perfect day; so we may likewise abound in divine power. Indeed this, we find, we stand in need of; our journey lies up the hill, and is often rough and thorny, as well as beset with enemies on

every side. But through the strength of Israel we may stop the mouths of lions, in weakness be made strong, wax valiant in fight, and turn to flight the armies of the Aliens. Of ourselves we are not sufficient to think any thing which is good; but through Christ strengthening us we can do all things. Let all the powers of darkness combine against the soul, yet; they cannot shake his confidence who goes out in the strength of the Lord God. Nay, it is the energy divine which works in him, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Thus is he strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, while every fiery dart is quenched in the blood of Jesus, and the soldier of Christ goes on from strength to strength, from conquering and to conquer; till he is more than conqueror, through him who loveth us. Even the feeble may become like the house of David, and the house of David like the angel of the Lord. He who waits upon God is sure to renew his strength, he may run without wearying; he can walk without fainting.

3. It is his will that we should abound in divine love. Wisdom and power, without love, compose the character of the devil! He knows enough, and has power enough; but then he cannot love, and there he remains in his own enmity against his Maker, and against his own peace; and for want of this wanders up and down seeking rest, but cannot find it. But, now, Jesus, the Father's brightness, is come that this Godlike property may abound in us more abundantly, and the soul being baptized in

this heavenly flame, may be transformed into that heavenly image, and wear the divine signature for ever. There the loving Jesus sits upon his own loving throne, making all things new. There is no fear in love; O no, perfect love casts it out. The heart without love is just like the creation in a dark and tempestuous night; but when love fills the soul, it is just like the warm shining mid-day sun, after the refreshing vernal showers. O, what a heaven upon earth when a soul delights in reproaches, contempt, weariness and pain, and labours for him who died a world to redeem! How does it love every human creature, yea, its very enemies, and is willing to wash their feet, to do the meanest offices, so that they might be won over to the Lord who bought them! Poor fallen nature will do no such thing; it will not stoop so low as to put up with a slight injury, or a trifle of an affront: it will shew, *A proper spirit* on such occasions. Such is the reasoning of the world. *But love hopeth, endureth all things; many waters cannot quench it, the floods cannot drown it.* This is to the soul, what sap is to the trees, which circulates through the branches, and causes fruit and verdure to continue. Such is the case with the man whose heart abounds with love. He is *Like a tree planted by the river of waters, which bringeth fruit in his season.* Psal. i. 3.

4 The good shepherd is come that our joy might abound. This is what the man of the world is a stranger unto. He knows of no kind of joy, but what is of an earthly kind. Getting of money,

soaring in fame, strutting about in finery, and sensual gratifications are the principal objects of his joy. But if he will look into the Bible, he finds the saints rejoicing in different objects. *Thou hast put joy and gladness into my heart more than when corn, or wine, or oil encreaseth*, is the charming song of one, who could say in another place, *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for it well becometh the just to be thankful.* Psalm. xxxiii. 1. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, and covered me with the robe of righteousness he hath decked me like a bridegroom, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels.* Isa. lxi. 10. *I will see you again*, saith our Lord, *and ye shall have joy, and your joy no man taketh from you. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.* Rom. xiv. 17. So that the creed of the adult believer may be summed up thus. *We are the circumcision, which worship God in spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* Phil. iii. 3. It is true, the generality of such as have tasted of the divine goodness, live vastly short of their privileges; but that does not alter the truth of God. That is their own fault: for if they would hearken to his commandment, their peace would flow like a river, and their righteousness, yea, their joys like the waves of the sea. Hence our Saviour says. *Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: ask that your joy may be full.* This is the joy which will stand the

agonies of a death-bed, the scrutiny of the judgement-seat, and the terrors of a flaming world. It is such as tunes the harps of the saints in glory, and will fill their mouths with praises to all eternity.

5. He is come that we might abound in true purity; that we might be like, *The king's daughter all glorious within. To sprinkle clean water upon us that we might be clean. To purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* He cries out in the prophet. *Come, let us reason together; though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be made white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* *Yea*, says he, *I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.* Isa. i. 18. Every unholy temper is certainly a very unhappy temper, so that if we desire to be happy, we should labour to be holy; and nothing can make us so but the purifying blood of Jesus. Adam had this divine image upon his soul when he came pure from the hands of his Maker: so Jesus came to restore that lost image, to make a full end of sin, to bring in everlasting righteousness, so that we may be stedfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in every good word and work to the praise of his name.

6. But after all, if in this life we have only hope in Christ, we should be of all men the most miserable. But he has promised, that where he is, there his servants shall be also: that he is gone to prepare a place for them, and will come again, and receive them to himself; and has thus prayed, *Father, I*

*will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.* This divine prayer will certainly be accomplished, for he cannot pray in vain; so that they, who by grace are fitted and prepared, may enter into the joy of their Lord; be released from the crosses and trials of life; the infirmities of a frail dying body; the temptations of a subtle and spiteful enemy, and every circumstance which can create any pain, anxiety or sorrow. There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest. The inhabitant of that land shall no more say, *I am sick.* There our eyes shall see the king in his beauty, and behold the land which is very far off.

Nor shall the body be forgotten: no, the second Adam, the quickening Spirit, the Lord from heaven, shall quicken it also. He that is the resurrection and the life will raise it from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.—It is true, it is sown in corruption, but it shall be raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, but it shall be raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, but it shall be raised in power: it is sown a natural body, but it shall be raised a spiritual body. In a word, he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, *So that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.*

Thus the Good Shepherd came that we, his poor lost wanderers, *Might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly.* Stand astonished, O my

soul, at the amazing love, the unparalleled humility, the unconquered patience, the bleeding pity, and unbounded goodness of this true Shepherd, who came to seek and to save that which was lost. O, ye angels! ye sons of the morning; ye flaming pure fires, what did ye think, when ye saw your Maker become incarnate, and lying helpless in a manger? What did ye think when ye saw him tempted in the wilderness? when ye saw him a poor wanderer in this vale of tears? when ye saw him sweating, agonizing blood, in groans and strong cries? What did ye think, when ye saw his glorious face indignantly spit upon; rudely buffetted, and assaulted with vile scoffs and reproaches? What did ye think when ye saw him stretched upon the fatal tree, expiring in pain, torture and ignominy; and, lastly, lie cold and pale in the silent tomb! O, my dear hearers, well may your eyes weep! gracious signs of a heart which feels, of a soul sensible of such amazing love. O, my soul, how canst thou utter articulate sounds whilst thou art contemplating, and setting forth such an amazing tragedy. Precious souls, dearly purchased, embrace, O, now, embrace, this messenger. For every ruined rebel here he died; he came to seek and save that which was lost. O joyful tidings! heart-reviving sound! Arise, then, my dear fellow-sinners, wash away thy sins, now believing in his name. See, thou impenitent wretch, how just thy condemnation will be, if thou reject this precious Saviour! If thou prefer thy money, thy credit, thy friends, thy gratifica-

tions, to this alone Saviour; surely thy hell must be a hot one: O, bend, bow down, yea, break, heart of stone, so shalt thou be healed.

Lastly, let us honour the great ambassador of our peace and salvation. O, let every pulse beat to his praise. Being once brought into his fold, let us not wander from him any more; but let us abide in him, so shall he abide in us, and our fruit will appear to his praise. Let it excite in us to fill up every station in life as becomes the purchase of his blood; the travail of his righteous, suffering soul. Let his steps be attended unto, closely pursued, so may we urge our way, till we cast our crowns before him, lost in wonder and amazement for evermore. Even so, Lord Jesus!—*Amen.*

*FINIS.*

ERRATA.

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Page | 109 | line | 28 | for that *read* thus | Page | 261 | line 18 for Father *read* Son |
| —— | 110 | — | 27 | for and *r* or | —— | 265 | — 12 for in *r* is |
| —— | 121 | | | after Liskard, a comma | —— | 293 | — 24 for ny *r* any |
| —— | 129 | — | 2 | for orty *r* forty | —— | 322 | — 22 for had *r* has |
| —— | 242 | — | 24 | for hat *r* that | —— | 337 | — 2 after Scripture, comma |
| —— | 242 | — | 28 | for les *r* lest | —— | 348 | — 10 after prophet, comma |
| —— | 254 | — | 9 | for whethe *r* whether | —— | 350 | — 27 for sinners *r* sinner |

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